The Principles of Composition

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THE PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION

BY

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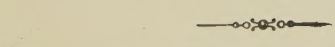
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

ARLO BATES



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To

BARRETT WENDELL

PREFACE.

THIS book has been written to meet the requirements of the course in English Composition given to students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the first term of the Freshman year. The course covers sixteen weeks, and the class meets twice a week. The course consists of written work and recitations. For the first of these each student is expected to write every week, outside the class, a theme of from three to four hundred words in length. This theme is delivered to the instructor at the beginning of one of the exercises, is read by him, and at the next exercise is handed back, with his criticisms written upon it. In accordance with these criticisms the student revises his work, in the first part of the term by rewriting the whole theme in the classroom under the eye of the instructor, and later by making on the original copy the changes indicated. The oral work consists of recitations on the substance of the text-book, and the discussion of such errors as the students have shown themselves most prone to commit. The part played in this course by the text-book is thus that

of a manual from which the student may learn the general principles of English Composition, at the same time that he is engaged in the practical work of writing themes.

For the reason that this book is intended to be used only as an accompaniment to a thorough course in theme-writing, it has not been loaded with examples of faulty compositions, bad paragraphs, incoherent sentences, and misused words. Experience has shown that such examples, to make any impression upon students, must be chosen from among the mistakes that they are making from week to week in their own themes. The usual effect of all sets of faulty sentences and paragraphs collected for correction is that their faults strike the student as being unreal and factitious, and not relevant to his own work. If, however, a sentence from one of his own themes is read to the class, and corrected by them, his weakness is brought home to him. In this book, accordingly, only enough examples have been used to make clear the nature of the fault under discussion. Further illustrations the teacher must find — and in doing so he will have no trouble — in the themes that he corrects from day to day.

This book deals with the general principles of composition. It is assumed that the student, before beginning it, has made a study of Barbarisms, Improprieties, Solecisms, Punctuation, and all the other

matters to which the standard of good use is applied. Nevertheless the youth of eighteen years is none too well grounded in this respect, and his practice in cases governed by good use is often widely at variance with the rules that he is supposed to have learned. An Appendix to the book has accordingly been added, containing in brief form a statement of what is the established usage in certain matters in which young writers are most likely to be at fault. This Appendix, however, is intended to be used rather for reference and review than for first-hand study of the subjects that it discusses.

While I am indebted to many hands that have generously helped in the preparation of this book, my debt is chiefly to three sources. They are — in chronological order — Professor Barrett Wendell, my classes, and Professor Arlo Bates. My debt to Professor Wendell is that of the pupil to the teacher. From him I have learned (at first hand, by good fortune) the system of Rhetoric of which the following pages are hardly more than a rearrangement and adaptation. So completely have my own habits of thought and methods of teaching been formed by this system that any other has become to me inconceivable; and what appears on the surface to be a bold appropriation of another's ideas is in reality merely the result of a gift for docility. To Professor Wendell I must also give

thanks for his kindness in reading the proofs of the book. To my classes my debt is that of the experimenter to his laboratory. From them I have learned how this system of Rhetoric must be presented in order to stir pupils to their best efforts and to obtain from them the most intelligent work; in brief, from my classes I have learned how English Composition must be taught. To Professor Arlo Bates my debt is that of the apprentice to the master. From his hearty and thorough criticisms I have gained such a degree of knowledge of the craft as has made it happily possible for these pages to be less amateurish in workmanship than they otherwise would certainly have been. Beginning with the first plans of the book, and ending not until the reading of the final proofs, he has given his assistance most unsparingly, with what profit to the book the reader may see for himself.

HENRY G. PEARSON.

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INTRODUCTION.

Although this book is somewhat novel in plan and in arrangement, it is founded upon what must be the universal experience of teachers; and, more than that, it follows what must be the universal practice. A student learns to write as a boy learns to swim, — by doing it. In these days nobody would attempt to teach composition by mere theorizing, any more than one would attempt to teach swimming on dry land. In actual practice the learner does not write first words, then sentences, then paragraphs, and defer the attempt to produce a complete theme until he has mastered these. This is the manner in which he learns to speak, but when it comes to the study of composition as such, he begins by trying to make whole compositions, — often, of course, short ones, but complete as far as they go. Not until he is able to write simple themes with some proficiency is he in a condition to learn or to appreciate details. This every teacher of composition recognizes in actual school work; but, so far as I know, it is for the first time adopted as a theory in the following pages.

The book is the result of experience and experiment at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The admirable and logical scheme of Professor Barrett Wendell was followed in the classes, but it was found

that it worked better when it was reversed. Whatever text-book was used, it was impossible not to begin with some instruction in regard to the theme as a whole. Students must be trained in the writing of the whole composition before it was possible for them to seize and to appreciate the distinctions involved in the construction of paragraphs and sentences, or in the selection and placing of words. For several years has been frankly used the method which is here presented. The practical efficiency of this method, and the desirability of putting into the hands of the students a text-book which conformed to the practice of the class-room have led to the writing of "The Principles of Composition."

The recognition of the wisdom of beginning the study of composition frankly with the whole composition has by no means been confined to the Institute. If I am not misinformed, the same experiment has more recently been tried at Harvard with much success, and in various parts of the West the practical common sense of a number of efficient educators has evidently been leading them in the same direction. The method is one of those inevitable deductions from experience which is sure to be made, sooner or later, and which commends itself at once when once it is formulated.

The success of any teacher of course depends less upon the text-book than upon the personal equation. The ideal text-book is a volume which furnishes necessary facts and the best system of mastering and arranging them, but which leaves to the teacher the part of presenting them and to the pupil the task of grasping and assimilating. No teacher makes a student master

the difficult art of composition. He can at most but direct and assist, so that the efforts of the learner shall be exercised to the best advantage. What is attempted in the present volume is to aid the instructor and the pupil, without interfering with the proper functions of either; to furnish a system, with illustration sufficient to make it clear; and to afford such hints as may be most serviceable both to those who use the book as an aid in teaching and to those who use it as an aid in learning. More than this no text-book of English composition can do without interfering with the usefulness of the teacher and the progress of the learner.

The importance of English composition as a means of mental discipline is so great that it should be kept in view by the maker of any manual, and should not be lost sight of by any teacher. There has of late years been a constantly growing appreciation of the value in practical life of the power to use written language with ease and precision. It has been abundantly recognized that the study of this art is not only an essential but almost a rudimentary portion of all technical training. Instructors do not to-day fail to impress upon their pupils that the man who cannot command his pen is handicapped from the start in business relations, and that in professional life he is working at a very great disadvantage. It is a practical age, and the increased attention given to the study of English is sufficient proof of the practical worth of this branch of education. The present danger, indeed, is that immediate utility shall be so strongly insisted upon that too little attention will be paid to the more remote, but not less important, office

of composition as a means of developing and strengthening and broadening the mind.

The decline of the study of the classics makes this office of composition of the more importance. From causes which are sufficiently well known, Greek and Latin have been a good deal discredited, and there has especially been a general failure to find a place for the ancient languages in technical education. The instant and practical value of the study of English is evident; but teachers should realize and remember that besides this it is possible to get from the living tongue much of the training which past generations got from dead ones. Greek and Latin being so often laid aside, it is the more important to insist upon the culture which with proper methods may be gained from English.

A sense of the application of form to thought is one of the most important of the results of the study of composition. The planning of the simplest theme, if done intelligently, is an exercise in ordering thought, and in properly shaping a series of ideas. It is of great importance that every student should learn that literary form is a matter with which he is personally concerned; that it is not merely a refinement of finished art, a triumph of the trained author, but a simple, practical necessity for every person who puts pen to paper. Even more necessary is it for the learner to perceive that this same literary form is an absolute essential of all clear thinking, and that thought, to be adequate, must be orderly. From the study of English composition the pupil should be made to see that his efficiency not only as a worker but as a thinker depends upon his power to give to his ideas an orderly

arrangement and a logical sequence; he should learn the value of form in thought and in expression.

A habit of mental accuracy is no less surely the result of proper training in composition than the sense of form. No learner can study the effects upon the finer shades of meaning of Unity, of Coherence, and of Emphasis, without increasing his delicacy of perception and his intellectual precision; nor can he exercise the mind in discriminating between words with a view to using them in the most nicely exact sense without advancing in accuracy of thought and expression. The power of thinking exactly and firmly is inseparable from a sensitiveness to the values of language; and it is from practice in writing that this sensitiveness is best obtained.

An appreciation of proportions, mental flexibility, and breadth of view are no less among the results of careful training in English composition. It is not necessary here to go more minutely into the matter; but every teacher and every scholar should clearly recognize that this branch of education is not to be followed for its practical utility only, great as that is. They are to look upon it as one of the most efficient aids to general culture.

Without enthusiasm, however, little of the good of this or of any study as a means of culture can be realized. It is here that the personal equation of the teacher tells most strongly. Unless the instructor is able to make his pupils enjoy their work, unless he is able to overcome the common prejudice against theme-writing, unless he is able to awaken some spark of genuine appreciation of the delight and satisfaction

to be found in mastering the art of composition, there is small hope that the wide possibilities at his command will be realized. It is possible under proper conditions to make any intelligent boy enjoy writing; and while ideal conditions are not easily secured, it is still true that it is generally not very difficult to awaken a healthy interest in composition. Until this is done, it is certain that little can be accomplished which is of deep or lasting value.

The more closely a teacher can connect any study with the actual life, the every-day experiences of his pupils, the more strong is his hold upon their interest. The present book illustrates how easy it is to bring composition into close relation with daily happenings and thoughts. Any man thinks and talks about the things which he sees and the things which he does; it is but a short step to the writing about them. It follows that this branch, if it be properly treated, is one in which students are most easily interested.

That composition has been pretty generally regarded as dry and laborious, I am well aware. Laborious it is. Nothing worth doing is likely to be other than laborious. Pupils are not repelled, however, by the difficulty of a study, but by a failure to find its relation to their own minds and mental growth. Dry can composition be only through inadequacy or dulness, — oftener found, I am forced in honesty to add, in teacher than in learner. Properly approached and appreciated, it is a labor of delight, and it is, moreover, a labor which is neither more nor less than the laying of the foundation-stones for all knowledge of whatever sort soever.

ARLO BATES.

PRELIMINARIES.

THE PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARIES.

When a student has assigned to him the subject of his first theme in English Composition, it is well for him to realize at once that here is a piece of work for his wits. The collecting of pen, ink, and paper is a necessary preliminary, and the process of putting words upon paper is undoubtedly a part of the task. Of the work of producing a theme, however, these make but a small part and cause him but little trouble. For the rest, the work which is really important and difficult, the writer must turn to his brain.

The instruments employed in theme-writing are words and ideas. In such studies as chemistry and drawing the instruments used are material objects, — test tubes and Bunsen burners, dividers and T squares. As might be expected, there is a great difference in the ease with which different men use these two kinds of instruments. In some men the brain works best when it is engaged in directing the movements of a tool held in the hands or the motions of the whole body in active and trained

exertion; in other men the brain works most quickly in dealing with abstractions, — in learning a foreign language, for instance, and in expressing ideas on paper or by word of mouth. The men of the second class are likely to be awkward in sawing a board or in learning to ride a bicycle; the men of the first class usually have difficulty in writing a theme. Nevertheless, clumsy although a man is in expressing his ideas, he must take especial pains to learn the use of the instruments employed, just as the man who is clumsy with his hands and his body must exert himself to master the use of the saw, and to learn how to keep his balance on a bicycle; and in theme-writing the instruments are the English tongue and a man's own wits.

Although practice in English Composition gives a student familiarity and facility with the instruments of verbal expression, yet he must not for a moment infer that he is here getting a kind of training that is essentially different from the rest of the training that his head and his hands receive. The skill of the man who can saw a board straight, of the man who can ride a bicycle well, of the man who can play his part in a game of football, and, in the case of studies, the success of a man in the chemical laboratory and in his plates in mechanical drawing, are all alike the results of training in a few general and fundamental principles, by which the affairs of the human race are carried on. Selection of the proper material for the work, careful planning, an orderly and logical arrangement, a sense of the relation between the details and the whole, and

exactness of execution are the elements necessary for success in a game of football, a chemical experiment, the making of a plate in mechanical drawing, and the writing of a theme. These principles are the essentials of all the undertakings of life. They apply to English Composition as they apply to everything else; and the student should look upon the work of theme-writing as simply another opportunity for training in the application of these broad and general principles by which all the acts of his life must be guided.

The first thing for the student to learn, then, is how these general principles apply to the especial branch of study called English Composition. It is of the greatest importance for him to realize that all education is one, governed throughout by these same firm principles; but he must also remember that in the case of each study they have a particular application. Here the point is to discover what is meant by selection of material, careful planning, orderly arrangement, relation between details and the whole, and exactness of execution, when they are applied to theme-writing. In English Composition these may be grouped under three general heads, which are called the principles of Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis. By studying these three principles, and by making what he writes conform to their injunctions, an inexperienced writer may hope to make his thinking and the expression of his thoughts clear and effective. These principles are broad enough to cover the construction, not merely of the whole theme, but also of the paragraphs that compose it, and still

further of the sentences that make up the paragraphs. Thus by the study of Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis in connection with the whole composition, the paragraph, and the sentence, the writer learns how these general principles of thought have a particular application to theme-writing.

It is evident that, with such broad and even universal principles, the authority which makes them binding upon the writer cannot come from a set of decisions rendered by a bench of rhetoricians or any "standard authorities." There are, it is true, certain matters connected with composition which are governed by definite laws. The practice of the best writers of national reputation at the present time is recognized as establishing on some points precedents that all must follow. Such precedents constitute what is called "good use," and furnish a standard by which is decided what is and what is not allowable. Good use, for example, requires a capital at the beginning of a sentence, a singular verb with a singular subject; and it determines what words belong to the language, and just what shall be the special meaning attached to each word. The rules of good use have the same conventional and artificial but nevertheless rigid authority which the laws of politeness have; their power is purely arbitrary. A violation of either has the same result: it hurts nobody but the offender. For details, the rule of good use is sufficiently binding. The three principles of composition, however, which are also principles of thought, require a broader foundation of authority.

The basis of authority for the principles of Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis lies in the fact that they represent what the common experience of mankind has found to be the best way of expression. Men in all generations who have tried to give utterance to their ideas by word of mouth or to put them on paper have encountered difficulties, struggled with them, and met with success good or bad. What they have discovered they have used, profited by, and so felt bound to hand down to those who should follow them. Gradually evolving from the attempts of writers of all kinds, certain general principles have become clear, and made their value evident as guides for a man who wishes to put his thoughts in language that shall do his work exactly and forcibly. With the constantly growing realization of the worth of these principles of composition, came stronger and stronger support for them, as representing an experience more widespread. Thus the observance of these principles is now obligatory, because they stand for the general processes of thought as practised by all men.

Under these circumstances, it is the business of the young writer to accept the principles of composition without question. They are not invented for his discomfort any more than the multiplication table is a special and unreasonable engine for the annoyance of his boyhood. In each case what so provokes his impatience and discourages his freedom and originality is nothing but a compilation of the experience of his predecessors. If he stumbles in the path they

made, it is not so much because the way is rough as because his steps are not yet steady. The child, accepting the statement that twice two makes four, straightway begins to make operations with pencils and pieces of chalk, and thus learns to apply his new knowledge. In the same spirit the writer should take the principles derived from the work of men who have known how to think and to write clearly, and in his own writing try to follow those principles constantly. It is usually worth while for us to take advantage of the experience of our predecessors. No man now ever thinks of entering a football match if he is not dressed and armored for the game. In the same way no student can afford to disregard the methods that generations of writers have proved to be wisest.

Theme-writing, then, is a task which requires the active exertions of the writer's brain, in dealing with words and ideas. The principles by which his work is guided are the principles which underlie all work and thought. In English Composition the special forms that they take receive the names of Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis. Finally, the authority which enforces the observance of these principles is not the arbitrary ruling of good use, but the fact that all trained writers do their work in accordance with these principles. This is their practice because they have found that thus they are best able to make their writing clear and effective.

THE WHOLE COMPOSITION.

CHAPTER II.

THE WHOLE COMPOSITION: SUBJECT AND TITLE.

If a man has a theme to write, he must have something to write about, — that is, he must have a subject. The conditions under which he prepares his themes make it the best plan for him not to choose his own subject either at random or after a long and desperate search, but to take the subject which is assigned to him by his instructor and which is selected and restricted to fit his especial needs. Further, in order that he may lose no time in searching through books and papers for information on his subject, and in order that he may focus his whole attention on the best way of saying what he has to say, he is asked to write on no subject of which he has not already some knowledge. His theme-subjects are accordingly taken from among things that are fresh in his memory or that have just come within the range of his growing experience, such as the character of his preparation at fitting school, an account of one of the studies which he is pursuing, or his observations on the conversation of his fellow-students. On subjects of this description, moreover, all that he is likely to have to say can be said within the space of two or three pages of theme-paper. When his subject is restricted in this way, the writer

escapes the danger of attempting a piece of work that is altogether beyond his powers, his time, and his space limit. Consequently, with a subject of a familiar character and restricted in scope to the present powers of his performance, he is able at once to think how he may best present his ideas.

The advantage that the writer gains from having as a theme-subject something on which he already has some knowledge appears, for one thing, in his being able immediately to set to work. He is not obliged to ask himself in despair, "What shall I say?" but his first question is one of self-examination, — "What do I think?" His mind is already stored with opinions, memories, ideas, or convictions on the subject proposed. His first task is accordingly to examine his mind and see what these are. If he can become clear in regard to them, he has accomplished half his work. If he tries simply to think of something to say, the result is sure to be vexation; but he is in the right path from the moment that he begins to endeavor to make clear to himself what are his actual thoughts on the subject in hand, and he reaches the right path soonest when the subject is taken from his familiar and every-day experiences.

The title is the name of the theme. It is entirely distinct from the subject of the theme. Its relation to the subject is that of a label to a bottle. The title of a theme, for example, is "Football News in the *Boston Herald*"; the subject is a characterization of the football news printed in that paper. The title

as a label to designate the theme must do its work conveniently and exactly; it must be short and easy to say, and it must be a perfect fit, — neither too small nor too large. "Chemistry" and "Amateur Photography" are titles[1] that are plainly too broad for any treatment of these subjects that could properly be included within four hundred words. If these titles are restricted, however, so that they read, "My Preparatory Work in Chemistry" or "The Freshman Course in Chemistry at the Institute," and "The Technique of Amateur Photography," or "My Experiences as an Amateur Photographer," they designate subjects that come within the limits of a three-page theme. If, again, a student is writing on the character of his preparation for the Institute, he must fit to this subject a title that will describe it exactly. The following are titles good, bad, and indifferent, that may suggest themselves to him: —

How I Prepared.
My Preparation.
Three Years at the B—— High School.
The Scientific Course at M—— Academy.
My Preparation for the Institute.
The G—— School and What it Did to Prepare Me for the Institute.

Of these titles, only that one may be chosen which unquestionably fits the subject as the writer intends to present it, and which is also conveniently short.

[1] For alternative examples see p. 47.

The title will then designate the theme with brevity and precision.

On one point, however, there must be no mistake. As the title is entirely distinct from the theme, it must never be allowed to connect itself in any way with the first sentence of the theme. The opening sentence should always read as the real beginning, and should never imply knowledge of any word or phrase contained in the title. An example will show a common way in which this rule is disregarded. Of a theme entitled "What my Fitting School Needs Most," the first sentence is, "It needs most a gymnasium." Here the antecedent of the pronoun "it" is in the title, and the sentence taken by itself is unintelligible. In another theme with the same title, the first words are, "In writing on this subject, I wish," etc., and these words mean nothing until the reader has looked back to the title. Two examples are more than enough to show the nature of this error and the necessity of beginning a theme without reference to the title.

With these matters concerning the subject and the title clearly understood, the student is in a position to consider the application of the three principles of Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis to the whole composition.

CHAPTER III.

THE WHOLE COMPOSITION: UNITY.

THE first thing which a student who starts to write a theme should realize is that the theme must be about one thing. Many thoughts will naturally be included in the theme, but they must all belong to a single subject. That one subject represents the reason why the theme is written. The student may wish, for example, to tell something about his preparation for the Institute, the methods of discipline in the school where he fitted, the need of a better fire department in his town, or any other subject of which he already has some knowledge. Since it is necessary for him to write on this subject, it is his business to separate it from everything else in his mind, and to consider it by itself as a unit. When a man buys a piece of land he puts a fence round it to mark the separation of his own property from the world outside. So, in preparing to write a theme, a man must make a similar separation between the ideas that really belong to his subject and those that do not belong to it. Moreover, if the landowner builds his fence in the wrong place, he is likely to enclose land not his own; and if the writer makes his separation carelessly, he is likely to include an idea that has little or nothing to do with his main purpose. If an irrelevant idea is thus included the effectiveness of the whole is weakened, for the theme is no longer a unit. It is highly important, therefore, for the writer to realize at the outset that

he has to write about one thing, a single subject, clearly and unmistakably separated from everything else.

The principle by which this separation of ideas and selection of material are accomplished is called the principle of Unity. By this principle every fact, illustration, argument, or anecdote which the writer thinks of putting into the theme must be tested. If the idea in question proves, after this test, to come within the territory of the subject on which he is writing, then it may be enclosed within the limits of the theme. Many things there are which might be said about any subject, since they have with it some connection more or less close. Nevertheless, just because they are so many in number and so diverse in character, some selection must be made; and the principle that decides which of them shall be accepted and which rejected is the principle of Unity.

When a man sits down to write a theme he must remember that the principle is a practical one and needs to be constantly applied. His first impulse is to wait for an idea to come to the surface, put it down on paper, wait for another idea, put that down, and so on until the required space is filled. These recollections and impressions and inspirations, however, that come or should come crowding up are not all of equal relevancy. Some, as it is plain at a glance, belong within the field of the subject; others, it is equally plain, belong outside it. Many are on the line. To these last, especially, the writer needs to apply the principle of Unity. When he does this he sees at once that one of them is absurdly irrelevant, that another is worthless, that a third belongs

after all in the theme, and so on. In this way every possible idea which occurs to the writer for the theme receives scrutiny, and no idea is admitted until it has successfully passed a rigid entrance examination for Unity.

A specific case[1] may serve to show more clearly the practical value of the principle of Unity. In considering what he shall say in a theme entitled "My Preparation for the Institute," a person might naturally enough jot down the following ideas as possible material: —

1. Early interest in mechanical toys.
2. Early ambition to become a locomotive engineer.
3. Number of boys in the High School who were preparing for the Institute.
4. Preparation in first and second years.
5. Work as a brakeman during the summer vacation.
6. Harder work in the last years.
7. Course in mathematics.
8. Course in languages.
9. French teacher.
10. Entrance examinations.
11. Admission to the Institute.

If by "Preparation for the Institute" the writer means the work done to enable him to pass his entrance examinations, he will see, as soon as he applies the principle of Unity, that some of these ideas are irrelevant. The first two ideas, of course, have nothing to do with the subject. Number three has a place if the size of the classes preparing for the Institute affected in any way the preparation of the writer. If it is only a statement

[1] For an alternative example see p. 48.

of general interest, it must be dismissed as worthless. Number four belongs in the theme; number five does not belong in it. Numbers six, seven, and eight must certainly be included. In the case of number nine, the writer sees that if he speaks of his French teacher, it is necessary to show how that man influenced his preparation. The teacher may have been a poor disciplinarian, and so may have destroyed all respect for his ability to teach French, with the result that the writer never learned his lessons, failed in the entrance examination, and so was obliged to take the study again in his last year, with great inconvenience to his other work. By statement of these facts the writer may show that his French teacher did influence his preparation, and so may justify mention of him. Numbers ten and eleven deserve nothing more than the barest mention, to show the accomplishment of the preparation. In this way the writer sifts his material; what is properly relevant to his subject he saves for use, the rest he throws away, and the principle that guides his choice is the principle of Unity.

There are two ways in which a violation of the principle of Unity is likely to occur, and these two ways it is well to consider in detail.

The first of these violations of Unity has to do with a false beginning of the theme. In narratives, for example, there is a constant temptation to begin at a point of time much earlier than the title warrants. An account of a day's fishing trip on the Maine lakes may, in the work of a careless writer, begin with the

preparations of the preceding night, or with the arrival in camp a week before the day of the trip, or even with the state of exhaustion in July which made a month in the woods a necessity. All of these statements, however, deal with time before the actual start for the lakes on the morning of the trip, and so are false beginnings. To take another case: for the beginning of a theme on "My First Business Experience," many suggestions offer themselves. The many ways in which a boy may earn money, the advisability of his learning the value of money while he is young, the number of boys who begin at an early age to earn money, — any one of these ideas might, as it seems at first, stand in the opening sentence of the theme; but a reference to the principle of Unity shows the same fault in all. They are about "First Business Experiences in General," not about "*My* First Business Experience." Compared with these false beginnings, it is easy to see the merit of the following serious and simple sentence that begins a theme on this subject: —

My first business experience was keeping hens.

Examples of this sort show that in theme-writing, as in every other undertaking of life, great advantage is gained from a fair start.

The great cause, however, of all this trouble at the beginning is that some young writers seem to think that any start which they may happen to make is necessarily a part of the theme. Valuable as such a start may be for the purpose of getting under way,

of setting sluggish thoughts flowing, it is in all probability good for nothing else. What the school-boy knows as an "Introduction" is an example of this kind of false beginning. It is in general made up of his first thoughts, the ideas that come into his head when he sits down and asks himself, not "What do I think?" but "What shall I say?" To put these thoughts on paper undoubtedly warms him up to his work, but what he writes thus is hardly ever likely really to belong to his subject. Its relation to the real theme, and the right beginning of the theme, corresponds exactly to the relation between the ten minutes of preliminary practice on the football field and the opening play of the game itself. One is desultory and disorganized, the other is deliberate and a significant part of the game as a whole. Nevertheless, in spite of the plainly illogical character of such an "Introduction," as seen by the light of the principle of Unity, the inexperienced or careless writer is always exposed to the danger of this fallacy. A dozen suggestions may seem plausible for the beginning; but only such a one of them should be taken for the opening sentence as can stand the test of the principle of Unity.

The second way in which a violation of the principle of Unity is likely to occur is by digressions. The process that we call association of ideas may produce at any moment some fact which, whatever its apparent connection with the subject, will inevitably divert the writer from the proper course of his work. When a man once gets switched off on a digression, he is like

a car left on one of the sidings that railroad men call "spurs"; he can have no hope of further progress until he gets back to the main line. When a man who is writing about one of the valleys of western New York where grapes are grown has described that slope of the hill on which the vineyards are situated, it naturally occurs to him to mention the fact that on the other slope and in the country beyond no grapes grow. Thus, by speaking of that other slope, he has "side-tracked" himself, so to say, as completely as if he had digressed to lament the absence of vineyards in Labrador. The following quotation from a theme on "The System of Government in My Preparatory School" is extremely faulty in respect of digressions: —

> Over this principal was a superintendent, who was appointed yearly by the town. The superintendent had general supervision of the school, and was responsible to the town for the manner in which the school was conducted. He also had sole charge of buying text-books and of hiring teachers. Lastly, there was a board of three committeemen, who were elected for a term of three years by the town, but so elected that one went out of office every year. This left two members on the board, who had respectively one and two years' experience.

The general duties of the superintendent and the way in which the school board is elected have nothing to do with the system of government of the school; yet they are things that to the writer's first thought seem entirely natural and proper to be spoken of. The moment, however, that he considers the principle of Unity he sees

that they are irrelevant. A constant guard against such digressions is necessary in order that the writer may keep to the main line of his thought.

It is not enough, however, merely to select such things as are closely connected with the subject and to reject everything else; the whole composition must have not only Unity of ideas selected but also Unity of expression. A writer should phrase his thoughts in such a way that the reader cannot help seeing how and why each idea that has been selected has something to do with the subject. In the world at large every fact exists in relations with many things; in a theme every fact must appear in its relation with only one thing, — the subject which the writer has chosen. In the case of the theme cited on page 17, Unity of expression is what is needed in order to show how and why numbers three and nine are ideas that really belong to the subject. Similarly, the quotation on the preceding page, if it is to have Unity of expression, must make clear what part in the government of the school is taken by the superintendent and the school board. The fact that the board gives the final decision in cases of expulsion (or some similar fact) is the thing which needs mention, and then the connection of the board with the government of the school is at once evident. A writer's work does not have Unity of expression until, along with every fact which he states, he makes clear the reason why that fact belongs in the theme.

One of the best ways of attaining this Unity of ex-

pression is by attention to what is called the "point of view." This phrase is employed to indicate the standing-ground, literal or figurative, from which objects or ideas are seen or thought of. As in real life things are always seen by somebody who is standing somewhere, so in theme-writing everything must be stated as it appears from a certain position, — usually the position of the writer. The title "My First Sunday in Boston" indicates a narration told from the point of view of the writer. A theme on "What My Fitting School Needs Most" explains the need of the school that the writer, as he sees it, thinks greatest. In a theme entitled "A Comparison of Lectures and Recitations," the point of view is that of a man who has knowledge of the two subjects, and is on a level where he can look from one to the other and compare them. The point of view should always be indicated or at least clearly implied in the first sentence (for example, "My first business experience was keeping hens"), and then must not be changed. Throughout the theme every detail should be presented from one unalterable point of view.

When one point of view has been chosen for a statement, every other aspect of the matter is thereby excluded. The fact that all other ways of looking at it are and must be shut out when a subject is thus treated, gives that subject Unity. Attention to the point of view is consequently one of the best ways of making the Unity of a composition evident. The object of the writer is always to produce in the mind of the reader, with regard to a certain subject, a definite impression. Any

carelessness about defining or keeping the point of view, is sure to make work blurred and confused. It is as if, after making one photograph of a house, a man should move his camera a few feet to one side, and then, on the same plate, take a second photograph of it. The lack of Unity of expression in work in which one point of view is not adhered to is well illustrated by the following paragraph: —

> To be inside an ordinary church organ while it is being played is an interesting experience. The sensations are hard to describe. All of the pipes except the largest are enclosed in a large room-like box, technically known as the "swell." There are shutters in the side of the swell which are opened when the organist wishes a loud tone, and gradually closed when he wishes to diminish the intensity of tone. To one standing in the swell of a large organ, the music, soft and distant to the listener outside, is a veritable whirlwind of sound. The vibrations shake the air. The hissing of escaping wind, the shriek of the high notes, and the deep reverberating thunder of the bass form a striking contrast to the same sounds as heard by one outside, to whom they seem quiet and peaceful.

The first two sentences here are written from the point of view of one inside the organ. The next two sentences give that of a person who understands the construction of an organ and is giving an explanation of it. The next sentence shows that the man in the organ is inside the swell, and so further defines the first point of view; but in the middle of the sentence is a phrase which shifts to the point of view of the listener outside. After the second interruption the first point of view is

continued, but at the very end that of the listener outside is again introduced. In this short paragraph the subject is looked at from three entirely different standpoints. As a result the theme is confused and indefinite, and has no real Unity of expression. To secure this Unity, there is need of a fixed and definite point of view.

With regard to the point of view one caution must be given. In order to determine the point of view for the reader, the frequent use of *I*, *I think*, *I believe*, *I have found out*, *It seems to me*, is not at all necessary. It is taken for granted that the writer thinks and believes and has found out, as otherwise he has no business to write the theme; and these words do nothing either for reader or for writer to establish a real point of view. That is a matter which lies back of mere words. It is determined by the mental attitude of the writer.

The principle of Unity as applied to the whole composition is a principle of the first importance. It provides a test by which the writer may distinguish what ideas belong to his subject and what do not, and by which he may avoid false beginnings and digressions. It requires that there shall be not only Unity of ideas selected, but also that Unity of expression which may best be attained by careful attention to the point of view. To observe this principle strictly is the fundamental condition of producing a good theme, since upon it depend both the matter and the manner of the work.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WHOLE COMPOSITION: COHERENCE.

After the selection of material for the theme has been made, the next question is the matter of arrangement. In other words, inasmuch as the writer has a subject which represents a single idea, and which he wishes to make clear to his readers, he must now consider what are the natural and logical steps by which he may advance until he has presented his leading thought in a clear and comprehensible form. Various subordinate ideas, or sub-headings of the main theme, will probably already have occurred to him as topics for treatment in different paragraphs; and his present task is to set them in an order which shall bring out his train of thought clearly and consecutively from beginning to end. In some cases, especially when a chronological arrangement can be used, the question solves itself; in other cases, the utmost amount of painstaking that patience will endure is not too much to expend upon Coherence. In either event it is upon a clear arrangement of material that the reader's understanding of the subject depends.

Whenever a chronological arrangement is possible, — that is, whenever the subject is a narrative or one in which the ideas have some relation to each other in sequence of time, — then that is generally the coherent arrangement. A theme which describes the writer's first business experience naturally begins with the

origin of his attempt, then narrates the events in the order in which one followed another, and ends with a statement of the results of the venture. An account of a chemical experiment describes the steps of the work in the order in which they were taken. It is a simple thing to do, but for the sake of clearness it is a positive necessity in such cases that the treatment of events should follow without deviation the order of time in which they occurred.

With many subjects, however, this easy chronological arrangement is out of the question. Much shifting about and rearranging of ideas is necessary before the order is found which is the best, and the best because the clearest. This matter, therefore, needs to be discussed in detail.

First of all the writer must consider how he shall begin his theme. In general, the surest way for him to decide this is to look at the question from the reader's point of view. What the reader needs at the outset is some statement that he can surely understand or that will interest him. The writer must accordingly try to imagine what piece of information about the subject on which he is writing will serve this purpose. The subject of his theme is, let us say, "The Technique of Amateur Photography." Following the principle of Unity, he has already resolved not to begin with an introduction on the pleasures and profits of the occupation, or the growth of his own interest in the subject, or the dozen other things that he was at first tempted to put into the opening paragraph; but this has only cleared the way for the real question. He now has to decide whether

he shall start with a description of the camera, with an account of how a photograph is taken, or with an explanation of the process of developing. Any one of these subjects might serve for the opening of the theme; but if the reader's point of view is considered, it is immediately plain that the person for whose benefit such a theme would be written has probably no knowledge of photography beyond what he has seen of the arrangement of the camera before the picture is taken, and what he has observed at the time when the exposure is made. The most easily comprehensible subject for the first paragraph, then, is the explanation of the actions which the reader knows by sight, but of which he has no further knowledge. Thus by starting with the known he is prepared to advance to the unknown. Again, the description of a suburban railroad station should begin with the outside of the building; and, moreover, the outside must be described as it is seen from some particular point of approach, either as it looks from the street or as it appears when a person gets out of the train. Such a beginning has the advantage of fixing the point of view at once; the reader knows where he is standing, and so when, later in the theme, he reads the description of the interior of the station he is better able to compare that with what he knows already. These two examples show with what advantage a writer may plan his theme so that the opening sentence shall be clear. Everything depends on his beginning the theme at the starting-point which is exactly right for the intelligence of the general reader.

The writer as well as the reader is often benefited by the application of the principle of Coherence to the beginning of the theme. It hardly ever fails to give him a hint for the plan of the whole. When he has once appreciated the fact that, having gauged the degree of the reader's knowledge, he must start with the known and go to the unknown, begin with what is near and advance to what is remote, and thus by easy and natural stages take the reader with him, then the matter of arranging his ideas in accordance with this rule should be a simple affair. In the theme on amateur photography, for example, as soon as the writer sees that he must first of all explain the operations that the observer witnesses, he realizes that the course of the reader's interest and intelligence must follow from the camera to the plate, from the plate to the print, and so on. Adopting this order, therefore, the writer is provided with a continuously clear and coherent arrangement. Thus by a start which is on the reader's level of comparatively complete ignorance, the writer is able to discover the successive steps by which he may lift the reader to his own level of complete comprehension.

When a logical arrangement of ideas has at last been effected, the next thing is to make this arrangement evident. At the cross-roads, or rather the turning-points of the theme, to press into service a new comparison, the reader must be made to realize that he has finished one division of his journey and is now to proceed to the next. To do this duty, and to tell him how far he has come and how much farther he has to travel,

guide-posts must be set up. Each guide-post, by marking distance and direction exactly, prevents the careless reader from losing the road. As the tendency to lose the road is a trait of every careless reader, and as nine persons out of ten are careless readers, the matter of an appropriate mark to indicate every considerable advance is a thing about which no writer can be too careful. It must be remembered, however, that these marks do not make the Coherence of the theme, but merely serve to indicate its logical course. Just as guide-posts play no part in establishing the road, and are useless until it is built, so these verbal guide-posts cannot be set up until in the writer's mind the plan of the theme is laid out complete from start to finish. Their duty is merely to mark the way.

In considering the means by which the writer may make the reader keep in mind the course of the theme as a whole, it is well to notice first the value of transition paragraphs and summaries. Transition paragraphs serve the purpose of showing that one general division of the subject is finished and that another division, containing perhaps some subdivisions, is to follow. Paragraph three, for example, in this chapter, shows that the discussion of one method of arrangement has been finished, and that an account in detail of other methods is to follow. Paragraph six of the next chapter performs a like service. Summaries come at the conclusion of important sections of a work, and give a rapid survey of the ground covered up to that point. In this book a summary is placed at the end of the

treatment of the whole composition, and in the same fashion at the close of the discussion of paragraphs, and also of sentences. Both transition paragraphs and summaries, however, are means that hardly ever need to be employed in three-page themes, simply because the necessities of the theme are not complex enough to demand them. They are there as much out of place as a heavy carriage-bridge would be to take a footpath over a brook. In most longer compositions, however, such as a detailed explanation of some manufacturing process, or the technical description of a piece of machinery, these two ways of making the plan clear and easy to follow are indispensable.

One way of arrangement capitally adapted to themes of three or four hundred words in length, is to enumerate at the outset the points that are to be dwelt upon, and then, as each comes up in turn, to refer to the first enumeration. A good example [1] of this method is to be found in the following paragraph, which begins a theme entitled, "What My Fitting School Needs Most": —

> The greatest needs of my fitting school are a larger lecture hall, a new gymnasium, and a larger athletic field.

The three succeeding paragraphs, accordingly, deal with these needs in turn, and begin as follows: —

> A larger lecture hall is greatly needed, etc.
> A new gymnasium has long been desired, etc.

[1] For an alternative example see p. 48.

The third need of which I spoke is that of a larger athletic field.

If the writer adopts this method, there is one consideration which, however obvious it may seem, he must not be above regarding. When he lays down in his first paragraph a definite order of treatment, that order he must stick to without variation. It will not do for him to shift his plan and put in the second place the paragraph on the lapse of interest in athletics. Since he has given the need of a gymnasium the second place in the list, he must give it the second place in the theme. When a writer follows this method, first outlining his plan, and then making it evident that he is adhering to it, the reader has no excuse for not comprehending clearly and immediately the course of the theme.

Connecting sentences between the main divisions of the theme are important guide-posts. An examination of this chapter on Coherence will show the work that such sentences do. Pages 26 to 29 are given to the discussion of (1) what a clear beginning does for the reader, (2) what it does for the writer; and these two subjects are connected by the sentence on page 29 beginning, *The writer as well as the reader*, etc. On page 29 the sentence that begins, *When a logical arrangement of ideas*, etc., shows a transition from the discussion of arrangement to the treatment of means by which this arrangement is to be indicated. In the theme referred to in the preceding paragraph, the

three sentences that introduce the three divisions perform this same work of connection. Such sentences, then, are useful and important as indicating a turn in the road, and if the reader is not to travel undirected, in danger of losing his way at every cross-road, these guides must be carefully set in position.

The principle of Coherence thus provides first for an arrangement of the theme that will conduct the reader clearly and logically, step by step, from the beginning to the end; and second for the adoption of such means as will enable him to keep constantly in mind not only the details of his progress, but also his course as a whole. Both of these requirements are important and even imperative. When they are once understood, it is an easy and simple thing to carry them out, if only the writer remembers to do it. The point is that he must remember; and he must remember not because the rhetorics say so, but because the object of writing is to be understood, and to be understood the writer must above all things else be steadily coherent.

CHAPTER V.

THE WHOLE COMPOSITION: EMPHASIS.

A SENSE of the relative values of things is necessary for a man in the affairs of every-day life, and it is especially requisite in English Composition. The need of distinguishing the difference in purchasing power of a dime and of a dollar is no greater than the necessity in theme-writing that a man shall find out which of his ideas are of small account and which are truly important. To do this he must examine all the ideas that he has selected for his theme, and assess them, so to say, to get the value of each. He must also consider their relation to the theme as a whole, and estimate the fractional part each is in the unit which the whole composition represents. By this process he learns to discriminate between the weighty and the trivial, to decide for which of his ideas a single sentence is sufficient, and which need the space of a full paragraph to make their importance evident. The writer thus comes to appreciate the relative values of ideas, and to see that there is need that those which are significant should be duly emphasized.

The questions of the relative values of ideas, of proportion, and of the means by which the reader may see which ideas are important, are determined by the third of the three principles of composition, the principle of Emphasis. The principle of Unity deals with the selection of material, the principle of Coherence deals

with the arrangement of material with a view to clearness; the principle of Emphasis has to do with the arrangement of material with a view to indicating its importance.

In order to secure Emphasis, a writer must plan his work so that each paragraph shall have an amount of the whole space proportionate to its importance. As far as limit of space is concerned, a theme is written under the same conditions that govern most of the newspaper and magazine work of to-day. A definite amount of space is allotted to a writer, and whatever he writes must be an article complete in itself, containing as nearly as possible a specified number of words. He must accordingly plan the length at which each part shall be treated, so that it may not occupy more than its due share of room. The writer of a three-page theme must settle the same problems, and in his case, if the proportions are bad, the fault is especially evident. Within such a small space it cannot escape notice, and as a result the effectiveness and force of the theme are entirely destroyed. The composition appears utterly purposeless, and the reader wonders why in the world it was ever written. In any kind of writing failure to give Emphasis to important ideas by means of a proportionate length of treatment invariably means loss of force, and sometimes entirely destroys intelligibility and interest.

An examination of the plan of two themes[1] will show how Emphasis suffers from poor proportion. In the

[1] For an alternative example see p. 48.

first theme, entitled "The Needs of My Preparatory School," the plan and the proportions of the paragraphs are as follows: —

> First among the needs of my preparatory school might be mentioned that of new text-books. Etc. (Paragraph of one hundred words.)
>
> Next among the needs is, I think, that of regrading the school. Etc. (Paragraph of one hundred words.)
>
> The last need, and also the least important, is that of having some system of marking. Etc. (Paragraph of two hundred words.)

If the third need is the least important, it should not have one-half the theme given to it. Fifty or sixty words at most is all that it should receive. As it is now, the reader on finishing the theme has his head filled with the writer's ideas as to changes in an unimportant detail of the school. In the second theme, which is on the same subject, the writer takes one hundred and seventy words for the need of larger quarters; fifty words for the need of a French instructor who can speak French well; and eighty words for the need of a course in political economy. Then he ends the theme with the following paragraph: —

> I might add that the High School most needs a school board that will properly attend to its needs.

In this case it is plain that if a new school board is the most important need, it should receive fuller treatment. In a revision of the theme the other details should accordingly be mentioned as briefly as possible and the

main part of the theme should be devoted to the presentation of the greatest need of the school. In order to improve the Emphasis of these two themes, the proportions of each must be completely altered.

The probable cause in these two examples of poor proportions is that the writer, before beginning his theme, did not stop to consider the relative importance of the different ideas on which he was to write. In the first example he did not give full enough treatment to the ideas in the first paragraphs; and so when he had written half the theme he found that he had many lines to fill and only an unimportant idea with which to fill them. In the second example the writer covered the whole space with insignificant details; and then, when he reached his main subject, finding that he had no more room, he said, as if it were an afterthought, *I might add that the High School most needs*, etc. The artless use of the word *add* is direct evidence against the writer that his plan of proportions — if he ever had any — has gone completely out of his head. In each of these examples there are strong reasons for supposing that the writer did not begin his work by making a careful plan with a view to bringing out the important facts; in each case the theme as a whole is weak, entirely lacking in both purpose and force.

To give his theme Emphasis, then, a writer must first of all take into consideration the relative values of his ideas, and give them an amount of space proportionate to their importance. In addition to this method it is

also possible to secure Emphasis by arrangement and position of ideas.

For the purposes of Emphasis the important points of a theme are the beginning and the end. In other words, the ideas that the writer wishes to impress most strongly on the reader should be put in those parts of the composition where attention to what is read is most alert; and general experience has shown that those parts are the beginning and the end. Why they are the places that are sure to strike the reader's notice a brief explanation will make clear.

An audience gathered to hear a speaker is generally at the beginning of the address in a receptive mood. At the start the attention of the listeners is fresh; they do not mean to allow themselves to be distracted, they are willing and perhaps eager to hear. A good speaker, whom experience has made familiar with these facts, is therefore likely to begin with some striking statement, or some anecdote upon which this interest may quickly seize. If he thus makes use of the opening sentences to indicate his main subject and the character of the treatment, he may feel sure that what is of greatest importance in the address is, by reason of its position in the first sentences, emphasized as fully as possible. Then, as he proceeds to give details and to amplify his thought, the attention of a part of his audience will probably fall away, and this lapse of interest a good speaker takes into account. He also has found out that a general return of attention always sets in at the sign of *Finally* or *In closing, let me sum up.* So, taking

advantage of this, he devotes the final sentences to the most forcible statement possible of the thought which he wishes to emphasize and to have the audience carry away with them. If he does this he has every chance of being successful, for nothing comes after to destroy the impression created by his last words. Every idea in the speech is in turn covered up, so to say, by the idea which is immediately placed upon it. With the last idea this is of course not the case. It is on top, and so the mind remembers it. It is for this reason that a good speaker takes great care in placing at the end, as well as the beginning, of his address, the statements to which he wishes to give the most Emphasis.

Again, to take another example, any reader's experience with the daily paper illustrates the value of the principle of Emphasis. His eye glances over the page for striking headlines, he begins to read, and continues or not according to the interest for him of the first five or six lines. When he reaches the editorial page he begins an article which promises well, in all probability skims over the middle of it, and really reads the closing sentences, trusting to find in them the gist of the subject. On still another page he may find a column which starts out as news; but a quick glance at the last lines shows him that he has escaped reading a thinly disguised advertisement of X——'s Magic Hair Restorer, or some other quack nostrum. In each of these instances the first and the last lines have been the two places to which the reader naturally turned first; and in

each instance he found there the statements that the several writers had been most desirous of making emphatic.

After these two illustrations, it should be clear in what ways the principle of Emphasis may be applied to the writing of themes. Careful attention to the beginning and the end of the composition, with a view of putting in each place the statements that are most important, will go a great way toward making that importance evident to the reader. An examination in detail will show the means by which this is accomplished.

According to the principle of Emphasis, the theme should begin with a statement of some fact which is important. In the first sentence the reader gets his start, and for this start he should be given a statement which in its bearing on the rest of the theme is significant. Too often the writer begins by calling attention to some detail which is trivial and therefore in the opening sentence out of place. As examples of such unemphatic beginnings the following, each the first sentence of a theme, are instructive: —

1. To be inside a church organ while it is being played is *an experience that happens to few people.*

2. *Probably not one person in ten who uses a monkey-wrench ever stops to think that* in it are employed two of the mechanical powers *which have been so useful to man*, namely, the screw and the lever.

3. *You will doubtless be surprised when I say that* my preparation for the Institute covered five years.

In these examples the italicized words contain details that are of no importance whatever, and that considerably weaken the force of the statements with which they are connected. In each case the words not italicized give the important idea, and that should stand alone in the first sentence. In contrast with these weak and unemphatic beginnings is the opening sentence already quoted in the chapter on Unity, — *My first business experience was keeping hens.* Here in the very first line, a line which the reader cannot possibly overlook, is a plain statement of the main subject, informing him at once what the theme is about. A start of this sort catches the reader's attention immediately; and in the same fashion the opening of every theme should have Emphasis, for upon the character of the first sentences depends the reader's interest.

To begin a theme properly is a difficult matter, and the writer is in danger of violating any or all of the principles of composition. Each of the principles needs his consideration when he is deciding how he shall start his composition; but in the different requirements there is not necessarily any conflict. The first sentence of the theme on "My First Business Experience," which is good from the point of view of Emphasis, is also good from the point of view of Unity. In general, in the threefold examination which the beginning needs, a sentence which stands the tests of Unity and Coherence is likely to be acceptable on the score of Emphasis.

After the statement of the subject in the first line, the body of the theme should be devoted to the develop-

ment of it. This may be done by a presentation of the ideas connected with the subject, by statement of details, by examples, and in general by any means that will help to show in full what are the writer's thoughts on the subject. An account of the means to secure this result cannot be given here, because they vary greatly with the subject and the kind of treatment. It is enough for the writer to remember that the proper place for the development of his subject is the main body of the theme.

The end of the theme is a part which, according to Emphasis, requires especial care. It is a particularly important matter, for whatever is contained in the final sentences has the best chance of remaining in the reader's mind. The work of inexperienced and careless writers, however, shows in this respect many faults of Emphasis. Some lazy writers make a habit of stopping short at the first period beyond the page limit, as if they were sawing off a board at a specified length. Some serve a sort of "notice to quit" on the reader, — "Such were the reasons that induced me to enter the Institute" or "Such is the appearance of the railroad station at Malden." Sometimes the theme ends much in the manner of the following examples: —

1. I might add that the High School most needs a school board which will properly attend to its needs. (Final sentence of a theme on "What My Fitting School Needs Most.")

2. On the whole, however, I prefer a public school to a private school, since it is likely to have better teachers and

better equipments, and because it does not cost so much. (Final sentence of a theme comparing public and private schools, and basing the comparison chiefly on the athletic advantages of each.)

Each of these sentences illustrates bad Emphasis at the end of a composition because it presents in the very closing words an entirely new idea. That the idea has received no mention before is made evident in the first case by the use of the word *add*, and in the second case by the word *however*, a connective which denotes opposition rather than summing up of ideas. In reality the closing sentence should give the reader a notion of what is the writer's final judgment on the matter. In the above examples of bad endings the trouble is that a definite purpose to end the theme in a forcible and effective fashion never once entered the writer's head. To guard against this careless habit of leaving the theme at loose ends, the principle of Emphasis intervenes, and requires that the last paragraph shall in some way or other give the reader the complete results of the writer's thought about the subject of the theme.

Of the different ways of making the end of a theme emphatic, a summary is often serviceable. Sometimes the summary is merely a list of the subjects of the paragraphs; sometimes it is a general statement for which the specific details of the preceding paragraphs have been preparing the way. In any case a summary should leave in the mind of the reader a sense of one thing of which the writer has felt the importance, and the set-

ting forth of which has been his primary object. A few examples will show how the Emphasis at the end of the theme may be well managed: —

1. To sum up these statements: we find the private school more poorly supported, the public school with more competent teachers; the private school exclusive, the public school free. (End of a theme comparing public and private schools.)

2. These suggestions seem to point to rather an ideal state of affairs in a school, but it is well to make an effort in this direction, even if these plans which I have discussed cannot be fully carried out for some time to come. (End of a theme entitled "The School of To-day.")

3. Comparing lectures and recitations as a means of teaching, we see that what one lacks the other has. Therefore the best system is to have a combination of the two, and this is what is done in most colleges. (End of a theme comparing lectures and recitations.)

4. As I look back upon that experience, I cannot see that it gave me much wisdom in earning or in spending money, nor do I regret this fact. I invested in pleasure, and, in both the character and the amount of the article received, I think that my venture was a success. (End of a theme on "My First Business Experience.")

These examples are enough to illustrate the advantages of a proper ending, and to indicate some of the ways in which it may be secured. There is no cast-iron frame to fit which the closing paragraph must be forced into a uniform rigid shape; there is only the general principle of Emphasis, — the principle that the last lines of the theme should give the reader the point most important of all.

The principle of Emphasis requires that a writer shall determine the relative values of his ideas, and that to those which are most important he shall give an amount of space in his treatment proportionate to their importance. As a further means for securing Emphasis, the ideas of greatest significance should be placed in parts of the theme where they will most surely attract the reader's attention; and these parts are the beginning and the end. The main body of the theme should contain the development of the subject. The Emphasis of the first lines of the theme is usually good when they can stand the test of Unity and Coherence. Bad Emphasis at the end of the composition should be guarded against; and the writer should take especial care to make his final paragraph sum up the results of his thought about the subject of the theme, and leave in the mind of the reader as a conclusion the idea which the writer considers most important.

Summary of the Chapters on the Whole Composition.

The subject which is assigned to a student for his theme is one of which he already has some knowledge, and it is restricted in scope so that he may treat it adequately within the limits of three pages of theme-paper, an amount of space that may contain from three to four hundred words. The theme must have a title which shall designate it briefly and exactly. In the writing of the whole composition, selection, arrangement, and proportions of material are the chief things to be considered. The selection of material is governed by the principle of Unity; nothing should be admitted to the theme which is not immediately connected with the main subject. Violations of Unity, such as false beginnings and digressions, the writer should carefully avoid. He must give his work Unity of expression as well as Unity of ideas selected; that is, he must show details not in their relations to things in general, but solely in their relations to the subject in hand. Finally, he must carefully observe the point of view. After the selection of material, questions of arrangement and proportion must be considered, and here the principles of Coherence and Emphasis apply. The principle of Coherence requires a logical presentation of ideas. The writer should begin with facts that are known to the reader, and should advance step by step to facts that are unknown. The means that the writer may use to show the logical connection of his thoughts are transition paragraphs, connecting sentences

between paragraphs, and a statement at the beginning of the plan which the theme is to follow. The principle of Emphasis demands that the writer shall estimate the relative values of the different ideas that are connected with his main subject, and shall give each of these an amount of space proportionate to its importance. Emphasis is also secured if the writer takes care to give the ideas that he wishes to impress upon the reader such prominent positions as the beginning and the end of the theme. The opening sentences should present the subject in such a way as to arouse the interest of the reader; in the body of the theme should be given details, and the development of the subject; the final sentences should be a summary, or some statement that will give the reader the results of the theme. By means of the three principles of Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis, then, the writer is able to govern carefully the selection, the arrangement, and the proportions of the substance of the whole composition.

Alternative Examples and Exercises in Connection with the Chapters on the Whole Composition.

1. *Titles.* p. 13. "Talk" and "Newspapers" are titles too large for adequate treatment in a three-page theme. When altered to "What My Schoolmates Talk About" and "How I Read a Newspaper," they are suitably restricted. The following are titles of various merit that suggest themselves for use in connection with a theme on the advantages of athletic contests between schools: —

Athletics.
Athletics in Schools.
Interscholastic Games.
Should There Be Contests between Preparatory Schools?
The Advantages of Interscholastic Athletics.

2. *Selection of Material.* p. 17. The following ideas may suggest themselves as material for a theme entitled "How I Read a Newspaper": —

1. Number of people who read newspapers.
2. Extent to which I read newspapers.
3. Papers which I prefer.
4. Hour for reading the paper.
5. Amount of news which I read.
6. What I read first.
7. How I read the Sunday paper.
8. What I always read in a paper.
9. What I never read.
10. Is my time wasted?

Of the above topics, which clearly belong in the theme? Which do not? Which are on the line? Of these last which may be included if proper attention is given to Unity of Expression?

3. *Ways of Indicating Coherence.* p. 31. A theme on "What I Read in the Boston *Herald*" begins as follows: —

> The things which I read in the Boston *Herald* are the most important articles of news on the first page, the athletic and sporting news, and the short paragraphs on the editorial page.

The next three paragraphs begin as follows: —

> First of all I read the important news on the first page.
> Next I turn to the athletic and sporting columns.
> Last I generally read some of the brightest paragraphs on the editorial page.

4. *Poor Proportion.* p. 35. The following indicates the proportion of a theme entitled "Why A—— Academy Has No Baseball Team": —

> A year ago last spring our baseball team had a hard time, and before the end of the term it went to pieces, etc. (Paragraph of two hundred and fifty words.)
> Then there was no enthusiasm among the students and it was hard to collect subscriptions, etc. (Paragraph of fifty words.)
> Finally we lost three games in succession, and every one got discouraged, etc. (Paragraph of fifty words.)

Which of these ideas is most important? What is the proper amount of space for the first paragraph?

5. A study of the theme printed on p. 109, and entitled "A Character Worth Having," is valuable in illustrating the practical application of the three principles of composition. The following questions give hints for examination of the theme in detail: —

Unity. Are there any violations of Unity? Do the first two sentences belong to the theme? Is their connection with it close enough so that by a more careful attention to Unity of expression they may stand? What is the point of view of the theme? Is it consistently maintained?

Coherence. What is the sequence of ideas in the theme? Why is paragraph 1 at the beginning of the theme? Should paragraph 2 come first? Is the connection between paragraphs good?

Emphasis. Why are the first two paragraphs longer than the last two? Why is not the second paragraph placed last? Is the opening sentence good? Does the last sentence make a good ending to the theme? Is a concluding paragraph needed?

THE PARAGRAPH.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PARAGRAPH: UNITY.

A PARAGRAPH is a whole composition on a small scale. A theme is made up of paragraphs, but these are not merely divisions or fractional parts of the whole. Each paragraph is a unit by itself, although of a lower denomination, as the measure which is one-twelfth of a foot is also, considered as an inch, a unit. The relation between a paragraph and the whole composition consists in the fact that the paragraph presents the development of one of the ideas which go to make up the whole theme. What from the point of view of the whole composition is a subordinate idea, is from the point of view of the paragraph an idea to be amplified and expanded to as great an extent as the limits of one paragraph will allow. A paragraph, being thus complete in itself, needs to have the three principles of composition applied to it, in order that in structure and in treatment it may conform to the laws which govern the expression of all thought.

The principle of Unity as applied here requires that each paragraph in a theme should be devoted to the statement and the explanation of a single idea. About this idea should be grouped the thoughts that are necessary to explain it; and no thought that does not plainly

contribute to the explanation should be admitted to the paragraph. Every paragraph thus represents the way in which a single idea has grown up in the mind of the writer. An illustration may help to make this clear. In a theme on "The Needs of My Fitting School," the writer intends in one paragraph to speak of the need of a new gymnasium. Certain facts immediately group themselves about this idea, — the reason why there is no gymnasium, the low condition of athletics in consequence of the lack, the general toning up of the school which a new gymnasium would give. All these thoughts bear on the subject, and all are needed to present it in its completeness. When, accordingly, they are all grouped together in one paragraph, they represent the sum and substance of the writer's opinions on that especial matter, namely, the need of a new gymnasium. The reader thus gets within the limits of one paragraph one idea fully developed. In much this same fashion every paragraph should, so to say, grow together, each representing a group of thoughts expressing one idea.

It is unfortunately true, however, that this notion of a paragraph as a unit is one which inexperienced writers are slow to appreciate, and still slower to put into practice. With them paragraphing is a matter of accident or caprice; one paragraph may contain ten words, and the next two hundred. In view of the bad paragraphing which a large proportion of themes exhibit, it is well to examine in detail some of the commonest faults.

Some writers seem to think that a single sentence, inasmuch as it represents but one idea, is all that is needed to make up a paragraph. As a matter of fact, this is hardly ever the case. Such a lazy supposition produces a theme every page of which contains four or five paragraphs, each paragraph consisting of a single sentence. In the following example the writer has gone even further, for in one paragraph he has put only a part of a sentence: —

It is claimed by a great number of people that the lecture system does not produce so good results as that of recitations.

That the student fails to prepare himself upon the subject as well as he would if he knew that he would be marked according to the recitation he made.

Again, at a lecture the student may if so disposed spend his time in preparing his lesson for his next recitation instead of paying proper attention and taking notes.

As an actual fact the majority of students fear the recitation more than the lecture, and therefore pay more attention to it.

An examination of the substance of these so-called paragraphs shows that what the writer has said in them is in fact all about one subject, — the objections that are made to the lecture system. These objections, accordingly, instead of being separated into four apparent paragraphs, should all go together to make up one real paragraph. A paragraph is not a unit if it contains a fraction of a complete idea.

A paragraph is not a unit when it contains more than one complete idea. The indolence of mind in a writer

which allows him to pass from one part of his subject to the next without taking trouble to mark the transition by beginning a new paragraph, produces in the reader first mental confusion and then disgust. Such a theme offers a compact mass to break up which into its proper divisions will defy the brains and the patience of anybody. As for being intelligible, it might just as well have been written with all its sentences run into one sentence, or with all its words joined into one word. Imagine the lucidity of the present chapter if it were printed as one word eight pages long. The reasons that forbid such a proceeding are exactly the reasons that prevent a writer from combining two or more complete and separate ideas into one paragraph.

In paragraphs, as in whole compositions, there is constant danger of digressions. If the writer does not have a clear idea of the Unity of his paragraph he is likely to admit into it some fact which is out of place there. It may properly enough belong to some other paragraph of the theme, or it may have no logical connection with any part of the work; but in either case for the paragraph in question it is a violation of Unity. Such digressions may consist of a sentence or more, or a clause in a sentence, or even only a phrase. Some point of explanation or interest suggests itself without at the moment seeming irrelevant; yet when it is referred to the main idea of the paragraph, it is plain at once that it is a digression. In writing the paragraph on the need of a new gymnasium, for example, a student might naturally on first thought set down a sentence like the following:

Besides, a new gymnasium would do a great deal to revive interest in baseball, which is justly called the national game, and also in football, which I for one think is the finest game that there is.

Here the two relative clauses that modify *baseball* and *football* respectively have nothing whatever to do with the particular subject of the paragraph in question. They add ideas that come outside the limits of the paragraph, and unless they are struck off the sentence will destroy the Unity of the paragraph. Every digression of this sort should be avoided, as otherwise a paragraph becomes an improper fraction when it should be a unit.

The test for Unity is whether the gist of a paragraph can be condensed into a single sentence. If a paragraph is the development of one idea, that idea in its simplest form should be capable of brief and compact statement. The act of framing such a sentence as may summarize the paragraph brings quickly to light any digression. The two relative clauses in the sentence quoted at the top of the page, when they are once referred to the main idea of the paragraph, phrased in the sentence, *A new gymnasium is needed*, cannot for an instant stand the test. An attempt to state briefly the subject of the following paragraph shows that the writer is really discussing two subjects together: —

Although the guitar is capable of solo work it is essentially an accompanying instrument. The body is shaped roughly like that of a violin, but it is several times as large. The neck is nearly as long as the body, and is broad and flat. There are six strings, three of gut and three of silk

wrapped with wire. The register of the guitar is low, the highest note being a full octave lower than that of the mandolin. It is often employed as an accompaniment to the banjo or the mandolin, and it is also much used as an accompaniment to the voice. As a solo instrument the guitar is considered without exception the most difficult of all instruments to master, but a good degree of proficiency in accompaniment is easily acquired.

Here the first sentence implies that the paragraph is about the guitar as an accompanying instrument. The next three sentences, however, are evidently a description of its appearance. The rest belongs to the first subject. To state briefly the substance of this paragraph, then, it is necessary to say that it describes (1) the guitar as an accompanying instrument and (2) the appearance of the guitar. The lack of Unity is evident. When the three sentences on the appearance of the guitar are cut out, the difficulty is removed. The possibility of condensed statement in a compact sentence or phrase is thus a sure test of the Unity of a paragraph.

Up to this point all that has been said about the paragraph has applied to it as being a group of ideas that not only exists as a unit in itself, but also forms a part of a theme. In many cases, however, the paragraph exists as a unit not related to a whole of larger dimensions. Brief descriptions and explanations, anecdotes, and comments on matters of passing interest are subjects to which the writer can generally give adequate treatment in a paragraph of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred words in length. Such paragraphs are

in every respect whole compositions. As such they offer an admirable opportunity for the inexperienced writer to give himself practice in the exercise of the principles of composition. If he writes a daily theme consisting of a single paragraph, he is obliged to consider in this miniature whole composition questions of choice and restriction of subject, of selection, arrangement, and proportion of material; and all this with the greatest regard to economy of space. The constant exercise of his mind on these important details of composition is the best practice that he could possibly have; and the writing of daily themes, each a complete paragraph, will give the student a realization of the practical value of the principles of composition and a facility in expression which he can obtain in no other way.

The writing of single paragraphs is especially valuable for practice in Unity. The writer is obliged to select those details only which are absolutely necessary to his subject, for the space is small and every word counts. The slightest digression is glaringly apparent. A violation of the point of view is likely to ruin the Unity of the paragraph (compare the example on page 24). The writer must for the time being concentrate his attention on his subject, and, excluding everything else, first realize for himself and then express so that others shall realize it, that subject as a unit, separate and complete. By the drill in the writing of single paragraphs he is more and more able to give all his written work that Unity which is the first requisite of all good writing.

A paragraph, to sum up, is a whole composition on a small scale. The principle of Unity as applied to it requires that every paragraph shall be a unit, representing a group of thoughts about a single idea. Common violations of Unity are (1) the beginning of a new paragraph with every sentence, (2) the failure to begin a new paragraph with a new division of the thought, the result being that one paragraph includes more than one complete idea, and (3) digressions. The division of the theme into paragraphs is the means of indicating the different subdivisions of the main subject; but a paragraph may also exist independently of a theme, as a whole composition in miniature. The writing of such single paragraphs offers a good opportunity to the writer for practice in applying the principle of Unity. This principle in paragraph-writing is of the highest importance, for it is the principle to which the paragraph really owes its existence and its identity.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PARAGRAPH: COHERENCE.

THE principle of Coherence, which governs the whole composition, governs no less the paragraph. In each group of sentences it determines the order and the arrangement of ideas. The end sought is to secure a sequence of ideas natural and clear, such as there must be if the successive steps of the writer's thoughts are to be evident. By the aid of Coherence the writer aims to make the way plain and straight, so that the most careless and erratic reader cannot help walking in in it; and Coherence means chiefly a proper sequence of ideas.

The especial force of the phrase "sequence of ideas" may perhaps best be brought out by a comparison with the sequence of operations in a chemical experiment. The student first collects his apparatus and material. He then starts the experiment and performs in order the operations indicated. The fact that he has begun with operation A makes it necessary that he should next perform B; that involves his doing C at once, and so on. These several operations connect themselves in a natural and even inevitable sequence. Sequence of ideas in theme-writing, therefore, means a naturally connected series of thoughts, as the putting of a substance into a test tube, the heating of it, and the observation of what happens form a naturally connected series of operations. Such a connection of ideas

always exists, although the careless and haphazard way in which a lazy writer often flings his ideas into a paragraph may at first make the reader doubt the fact. An examination, however, reveals the relation, and it is then possible to reconstruct the paragraph according to some method of sequence. Such a sequence may be that of events in the order of time, that is, chronological; it may be that which follows from the known, step by step, to the unknown; or that which goes from what is near at hand to what is remote. In any event the result will be a succession of ideas natural throughout, logical in arrangement, and clear in connection.

The necessity for a strictly chronological arrangement of ideas, whenever that is possible, is shown by the faults in the following paragraph, a one-page theme on "The Track Inspection of the Pennsylvania Railroad": —

Each October the road-bed, the track, the bridges, the signals, and everything else along the line of the Pennsylvania Railroad are inspected by a party of its civil engineers, consisting of the chief engineer, the superintendents of divisions, and the supervisors of the subdivisions and their assistants. To the division having the best general line of track a prize of one hundred dollars is given. The track foreman having the best one hundred feet of track receives a prize of fifty dollars. Early in the spring the supervisors or their assistants are out lining up the tracks, correcting curves, and establishing grades. The workmen under them are busy all summer getting ready for the fall inspection. Freshly broken limestone or ballast is laid; ditches are cleaned, straggling stones are gathered, many of the stations are repainted, — all of this being

done with the purpose of attaining prize excellence. The rails are particularly well laid, and no water is allowed to accumulate below them. This effort to secure a general appearance of excellence does not, as at first might seem probable, involve a neglect of detail, for nothing escapes the scrutiny of the engineers. Thus it happens that every year the Pennsylvania Railroad has its housecleaning, and a very thorough one it is.

In this paragraph, although the use of specific language gives a good notion of what the track inspection is like, the details of the work do not follow chronological sequence, and for that reason the Coherence is faulty. The position of sentences three and four next each other is especially bad, for there is no real connection between them. To improve the arrangement it will be necessary to transpose the substance of the first three sentences to its proper place just before the last sentence, and to begin as follows: —

The track inspection of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which takes place every October, is looked forward to by all the employees of the road.

When the paragraph is re-written in this fashion, it is easy to see the gain in clearness from the arrangement of sentences in their proper sequence; and this gain is due to increased Coherence.

In the preceding example Coherence has been obtained by an arrangement of ideas in chronological sequence; but there are plenty of cases where such an arrangement is not possible. Hardly any of the paragraphs in this book, for example, can have their sen-

tences arranged in the order of time, because the matters with which they deal are not events. The ideas, nevertheless, do have some relation, although it is not so evident, and they are susceptible of arrangement in a logical sequence, according to the principle of Coherence. Here, as in the whole composition, the writer will find it a good plan to take the reader sentence by sentence, step by step, from the known to the unknown, from the near to the remote. Every sentence that is added not only should be intelligible because the preceding sentence stands where it does, but also should help to render intelligible the sentence which it precedes. Given this rule, the writer may test the sequence of sentences. and determine what should be the position of each in order that it may best help the reader in his progress from what is clear to the mind to that which is obscure. To illustrate by the present paragraph, the known fact with which it begins immediately suggests a question as to the method by which Coherence in other cases may be secured. The answer to this naturally comes next, and is stated in the form of a rule. Remarks about the rule follow; an analysis of sequence of ideas in a definite paragraph is given; and at last the idea is completely before the reader. So with each sentence the advance of the reader is a natural one, and he is supplied with the next fact which the progress of his information has prepared him to receive. Finally, the gist of his increase in knowledge is summed up in a single sentence, as follows. The sequence of ideas, in order to seem most clear and natural to the

reader, and therefore be intelligible to him, must take him from the known to the unknown, from the near to the remote.

When every pains has been taken to arrange the sentences of a paragraph in their proper order, the next step is to indicate this logical relation of ideas in such a way that the reader cannot help seeing it. The reasons that were given on page 29 to explain the necessity of showing to the reader just what is the plan of the whole theme apply here, and it is only necessary in addition to show the means by which the reader may be brought to realize the logical structure of a paragraph.

In paragraphs, the relation between ideas is shown by words and phrases linking the sentences one to another; just as in whole compositions it is indicated by transition paragraphs and connecting sentences. These words and phrases are called "connectives." The simplest and most frequently used connectives are, of course, *and* and *but*. They perform for language the same work that the signs + and − do for arithmetic; and, like the signs of addition and subtraction, they are the first means that a child learns to employ to express connection between ideas. When it comes to the writing of themes the student often finds that these two words are still almost the only connectives which occur to him for use. He puts them in everywhere, even at the beginning of sentences and of paragraphs; to him every possible relation of thought can be denoted by the words *and* and *but*. This is as if he tried to use the signs + and − to signify operations in multiplica-

tion, fractions, decimals, and proportion. Unfortunately for him, relations in the world of ideas are complex and manifold. There are relations of cause and effect, of condition, of time, of concession, of opposition, of balance, and hundreds of other intermediate and intermingling shades. For all of these are provided a multitude of words and phrases. The Coherence of a writer's paragraphs, consequently, will not be complete until, in addition to a clear and logical arrangement of ideas, he has learned the use of the words by which these ideas may properly be connected.

First, it is well to discover what are some of the commonest of these connectives. In the second paragraph on page 61 of this chapter, the word *first* in the second sentence connects that with the opening sentence of the paragraph. *Then* links the third sentence to the second; *therefore* the sixth to the fifth; *however* the eighth to the seventh. Each of these connectives indicates a relation between two sentences, and if omitted would leave the sense incomplete. Other words that are repeatedly used as connectives are *thus*, *moreover*, *nevertheless*, *again*, *yet*, *since*, *so*, *on the other hand*, *for example*, *accordingly*, *in the first place*, *consequently*, *finally*, *in conclusion*. All of these words should be at the writer's command, ready to slip into place as needed.

Beside the use of these connectives, there are other ways of joining sentences together. The adjective pronouns *this*, *that*, *such*, *other*, *another*, *some*, *same*, may be employed to show connection of ideas. In the para-

graph which has just supplied examples of connectives the fifth sentence begins, *These several operations*, the phrase referring directly back to the preceding sentence. *Such a connection of ideas* and *Such a sequence* at the beginning of the seventh and the ninth sentences respectively perform the same work of connection. In these cases, however, the words *these* and *such* modify nouns that are repeated from the preceding sentence. By this means any possible ambiguity is avoided. Too often one of these adjective pronouns, standing alone as a pronoun at the beginning of a sentence, evidently has its antecedent in the sentence that has preceded it, but exactly what noun is the antecedent is open to doubt. It is usually well, therefore, to repeat the noun in the new sentence, as in the cases above, and then there can be no room for mistake. If a pronoun proves really necessary at the beginning of a sentence, it must be clear at a glance what word in the sentence before it serves as antecedent. When there is the least uncertainty on that point, the connection between the two sentences, however simple it may be in thought, is not brought out in expression. The use of adjective pronouns as connectives, therefore, requires considerable care, lest they confuse the reader, instead of indicating to him the logical relation of ideas.

The need of connectives to join sentences together is as great as the need of mortar between the stones of a building. Without connectives the sentences have a tendency to fall apart. There is nothing to show that

each sentence is in the position where, logically speaking, it should be. As a result, a paragraph in which connectives are not used, no matter how careful the arrangement of ideas may really be, is in effect incoherent. The paragraph from which examples of connectives were taken reads, when those words are all removed, as follows: —

> The especial force of the phrase "sequence of ideas" may perhaps best be brought out by a comparison with the sequence of operations in a chemical experiment. The student collects his apparatus and material. He starts the experiment and performs in order the operations indicated. The fact that he has begun with operation A makes it necessary that he should next perform B; that involves his doing C at once, and so on. They connect themselves in a natural and even inevitable sequence. Sequence of ideas in theme-writing means a naturally connected series of thoughts, as the putting of a substance into a test tube, the heating of it, and the observation of what happens form a naturally connected series of operations. It always exists, although the careless and haphazard way in which a lazy writer often flings his ideas into a paragraph may at first make the reader doubt the fact. An examination reveals the relation, and it is then possible to reconstruct the paragraph according to some method of sequence. It may be that of events, etc.

In the paragraph thus mutilated the student cannot fail to notice the loss in clearness that comes from the omission of all connectives. In some places there seems to be a complete break in the train of thought, in other places the meaning is not, as it should be, evident at

a glance. Furthermore, the sentences do not read smoothly, and the jerky and choppy effect which they produce is due principally to the absence of connecting words. One example is enough to show the imperative necessity of such a careful use of connectives as shall indicate, beyond possibility of mistake, the logical structure of the paragraph.

When sentences are thus joined together the sequence of ideas in each paragraph should be reasonably clear. Connecting words, it must however be remembered, do not create this sequence, but merely make it evident to the reader. To secure Coherence, the writer must first be sure that the thoughts in any paragraph are arranged in the order which is most clear and natural. He then chooses his connectives to exhibit the clearness and naturalness of that order. A man cannot make a paragraph coherent by dropping a *however* into one sentence, a *so* into the next, a *nevertheless* into the third, and so on. He might as well expect to make the wind blow from the north by turning his weather vane in that direction. The words must grow naturally out of the inevitable course of the thought, else they are as false and flimsy as flowers of tissue paper. Dogberry, in "Much Ado About Nothing," is a man who has lived long enough to discover that thinking men are expected to define and designate the order of their thoughts by words such as *first* and *lastly;* but his native stupidity is such that he never realizes that these words do not supply the place of ideas. He consequently runs full upon the ridicule of Don Pedro.

Dogberry. Marry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

Don Pedro. First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence; sixth and lastly, why they are committed; and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

The case of Dogberry differs not in kind but only in degree from that of the man who does not attend first of all to the careful and logical arrangement of his ideas, letting the question of connectives follow after, as a matter of course.

The principle of Coherence as applied to paragraphs requires that the arrangement of ideas shall be clear and natural. The sequence of ideas may be chronological, or from the known to the unknown, or from the near to the remote; but it must always be such as to lead the reader one sentence at a time, each new sentence contributing to his knowledge the information that the preceding sentence has prepared him to receive. In order to make the reader see still more clearly the logical relation of the ideas, the writer must employ connecting words. These are principally connectives, and adjective pronouns used with or without a noun at the beginning of a sentence. Such words, however, merely indicate the relation of ideas in the paragraph. What really establishes its Coherence is the close and firm connection of thought which nothing but a logical arrangement can effect.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PARAGRAPH: EMPHASIS.

According to the principle of Emphasis, the ideas that the writer considers it most necessary to enforce upon the reader should be put in places that will surely attract his attention. The places where his attention is most active are the beginning and the end of what he reads. The main idea of a paragraph, then, stands the best chance of impressing itself upon the reader if it receives statement in the first and the last sentences. The first sentence should ordinarily indicate in plain language the subject of the paragraph, and the final sentence should sum up the results, and close the matter with a last word. The two sentences are conspicuous in position, they should also be significant in thought.

The first sentence should introduce the subject of the paragraph. To do this well it must always be clear, and should usually be short. When one person is introduced to another, any statement beyond that of names is superfluous and likely to be confusing. The main idea of the paragraph is then the thing which first catches the eye of the reader, and since it is put into a short sentence it can be comprehended immediately. Further, when the paragraph is a part of a theme, some words must be used in the first sentence to show the relation of that paragraph to the one preceding. A number of considerations are thus involved in the construction of

the first sentence, and careful work is necessary to frame a sentence that shall satisfy them all.

In the body of the paragraph should be placed the details, which of course are necessary to the complete presentation of the subject, but which are not emphatic. To put at either end of the paragraph a sentence that merely contributes one fact to the development of the main idea is to give that fact undue Emphasis. The reader thus fails to see the relative values of the ideas, because some idea which is not especially significant in thought has been put out of its proper place in the body of the paragraph.

The final sentence needs care, because it should give the last word on the subject which the first sentence introduced. What it contains is likely to remain in the memory of the reader, both because it is followed by nothing adding another idea on the subject of the paragraph, and because after it comes the brief pause which is instinctively made by the reader before beginning the next line. If, therefore, this sentence gives the conclusion of the matter under discussion, the Emphasis of the paragraph is good. So, to push the principle still further, if the words that briefly phrase the main idea come at the very end of the final sentence, the Emphasis is even better. The gist of the paragraph is then put not merely in the last sentence, but in the last words. In this way, by careful attention to Emphasis at the end of the paragraph, the final impression which the reader gets will be that of the conclusion stated about the main idea.

In order to bring out clearly the value of Emphasis in paragraphs, an examination of the chapter on the Unity of the Whole Composition may be of service. There are thirteen paragraphs in the chapter, and in the following synopsis are given the first and the last sentences of each paragraph.

Unity of the Whole Composition.

1. The first thing which a student who starts to write a theme should realize is that the theme must be about one thing. . . . It is highly important, therefore, for the writer to realize at the outset that he has to write about one thing, a single subject, clearly and unmistakably separated from everything else.

2. The principle by which this separation of ideas and selection of material are accomplished is called the principle of Unity . . . and the principle that decides which of them shall be accepted and which rejected is the principle of Unity.

3. When a man sits down to write a theme he must remember that the principle is a practical one and needs to be constantly applied. . . . No idea is admitted until it has successfully passed a rigid entrance examination for Unity.

4. A specific case may serve to show more clearly the practical value of the principle of Unity. . . . In this way the writer sifts his material; what is properly relevant to his subject he saves for use, the rest he throws away, and the principle that guides his choice is the principle of Unity.

5. Transition paragraph.

6. The first of these violations of Unity has to do with a false beginning of the theme. . . . Examples of this sort

show that in theme-writing, as in every other undertaking of life, great advantage is gained from a fair start.

7. The great cause, however, of all this trouble at the beginning is that some young writers seem to think that any start which they may happen to make is necessarily a part of the theme. . . . A dozen suggestions may seem plausible for the beginning; but only such a one of them should be taken for the opening sentence as can stand the test of the principle of Unity.

8. The second way in which a violation of the principle of Unity is likely to occur is by digressions. . . . A constant guard against such digressions is necessary in order that the writer may keep to the main line of his thought.

9. It is not enough, however, merely to select such things as are closely connected with the subject and to reject everything else; the whole composition must have not only Unity of ideas selected, but also Unity of expression. . . . A writer's work does not have Unity of expression until, along with every fact which he states, he makes clear the reason why that fact belongs in the theme.

10. One of the best ways of attaining this Unity of expression is by attention to what is called the point of view. . . . Throughout the theme every detail should be presented from one unalterable point of view.

11. When one point of view has been chosen for a statement, every other aspect of the matter is thereby excluded. . . . To secure this Unity, there is need of a fixed and definite point of view.

12. With regard to the point of view one caution must be given. . . . It is determined by the mental attitude of the writer.

13. The principle of Unity as applied to the whole composition is a principle of the first importance. . . . To observe this principle strictly is the fundamental condition

of producing a good theme, since upon it depend both the matter and the manner of the work.

Taking the first and the last sentences of the first paragraph, one finds that they contain the same thought, with the difference that the first sentence has the air of introducing it and the last sentence of finishing it. There are thus two statements of the main idea, and each of them is in a conspicuous position. The leading thought of the paragraph must, consequently, attract the reader's attention, and will also probably remain in his memory. In the same way, each of the other paragraphs begins and ends with a statement of the dominating idea. It is also well to notice that the first sentence in each paragraph is fairly short. What is needed first is always a simple statement of the idea to be presented, so that the reader may apprehend it at once. Whatever modifications, qualifications, and statements of detail are necessary should find their places in the body of the paragraph. The final sentences in these paragraphs happen to be somewhat longer; in two cases in the synopsis, only the latter half of the sentence is given. Generally speaking, however, there is a decided advantage to be gained from a short and vigorous final sentence. It serves as snapper to the whip. As another point in beginning a paragraph, it is worth while to notice that many of the opening sentences in the above synopsis contain connecting words that refer back to what has preceded. In the first sentence of the second paragraph the words *this separation* refer to the last words of the last sentence of

the first paragraph; *the principle* in the third paragraph, *The first of these violations* in the sixth, *this trouble* in the seventh, *The second way* in the eighth, and *this Unity* in the tenth are all expressions that perform similar service in linking paragraphs together. In the ninth paragraph the first part of the sentence as far as the semicolon serves as a connecting statement; and the introduction of the main idea of the new paragraph is made in the latter part of the sentence. In such ways as these, the work of connection which usually falls to the first sentence may be accomplished, and yet not impair the Emphasis of the beginning of the paragraph. Another thing which may be noted of the final sentences in the synopsis is that they often end with a word or a phrase that conveys the substance of what has preceded. Four of these sentences end with the word *Unity;* two end with the phrase *point of view.* As these are expressions that indicate the leading ideas of the paragraphs, their position as last words gives them every advantage of Emphasis. A study of the Emphasis of paragraphs as shown in this synopsis thus gives one an idea of the practical value of the principle.

In the writing of single paragraphs known as "daily themes," the principle of Emphasis is of great importance. In such a paragraph, standing as it does entirely by itself, and being of such a length that the eye with one glance can easily take it in as a whole, the beginning and the end are especially prominent. In the very first words the reader needs to know what is the subject,

and in the very last words what is the conclusion about it. Particular care must be taken to make the final sentence emphatic. If this is not done, — if, for example, the writer breaks off suddenly, or ends with an inconsequent detail, — the paragraph seems left at loose ends. It has an annoyingly incomplete appearance, as if the writer did not know how or did not care to make a neat job of it. The paragraph quoted on page 24, "Inside a Church Organ," that on page 57, "The Guitar as an Accompanying Instrument," and that on page 62, "The Track Inspection of the Pennsylvania Railroad," were written as daily themes; and an examination of them shows the great value of Emphasis in single paragraphs, and the purposeless and ineffective character of work in which this principle has been disregarded. In the first example (that on page 24), the opening sentence introduces the subject in a general way in as few words as possible. The last sentence, which, it may be remembered, is faulty in its point of view, is not emphatic, since it enumerates details where it should aim to give a general impression. A sentence ending with the phrase which occurs in the middle of the paragraph, namely, "a veritable whirlwind of sound," would make the Emphasis of the paragraph much better. In the second example (that on page 57) the Emphasis at both ends of the paragraph is good. What the paragraph needs, after the digression is cut out, is the addition of more details to bring out specifically the characteristics of the guitar as an accompanying instrument. In the third paragraph (that

on page 62) the first sentence, as it originally stands, is too long, and is encumbered with details. As it is rewritten on page 63 it is short, introduces the subject in a general fashion, and is therefore emphatic. The last sentence of the paragraph is admirable. It is short and comprehensive, and ends the theme with a snap. In these three examples, to sum up, the body of the theme contains the details that give the reader an exact and definite notion of the subject described. In placing them in this position the several writers did well. In the matter of the first and the final sentences, however, the paragraphs are not equally good; and it is by noting the differences in this respect that the writer is able to estimate the value of Emphasis in the writing of single paragraphs.

The principle of Emphasis, then, as applied to paragraphs, prescribes that the writer shall give especial attention to the opening and the closing sentences. The first sentence must introduce the subject clearly and briefly; the final sentence must complete it. In the body of the paragraph should be put details. In single paragraphs the principle of Emphasis is of great importance. By thus placing the main idea of a paragraph in positions where it will certainly attract the reader's notice as being significant, the writer does his best to make evident the relative value of his ideas.

Summary of the Chapters on the Paragraph.

The paragraph, like the whole composition, is a group of ideas, but it is on a smaller scale. Like the whole composition, its construction is governed by the principles of Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis. According to the principle of Unity the ideas in a paragraph must group themselves about a single thought. These ideas must not be distributed through several so-called paragraphs that are in reality only parts of one paragraph, and one paragraph must not contain several groups of ideas; but every group must stand in a paragraph complete by itself. Digressions in paragraphs, as in whole compositions, must be carefully avoided. Ease in forming paragraphs is gained by daily practice in writing single paragraphs; and such practice is especially valuable for the training which it gives in Unity. According to the principle of Coherence, the ideas in a paragraph must be arranged in such an order as will best make the sequence of thought evident. For events, the chronological arrangement is generally the right one; for other cases, the arrangement which begins with ideas that are known and proceeds to the unknown is the most coherent plan. The means by which relation and sequence of ideas are indicated are connecting words and phrases, especially those of the class called connectives, and words such as *some*, *such*, *another*, etc. These words serve as mortar to hold together the stones, — that is, the sentences, — of the paragraph. It is the proper laying of the stones,

however, that forms the real strength and Coherence of the structure. The principle of Emphasis demands that the first and the last sentences shall give a statement of the one dominating idea of the paragraph. The first sentence should be clear and brief, and the final sentence should give the last word on the subject. The body of the paragraph should contain the statement of details. Thus, by the aid of these three principles, a writer is able to make in each paragraph a clear and logical arrangement of sentences developing a single idea.

Exercises in Connection with the Chapters on the Paragraph.

A study of the paragraphing in the theme on p. 109, entitled "A Character Worth Having" will show the practical application of the principles of Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis. The following are hints for a detailed examination of the paragraphs: —

Unity. Summarize each paragraph in a single sentence. Is there a violation of Unity in the first paragraph? In any other paragraph?

Coherence. What governs the sequence of ideas in the first paragraph? In the second paragraph? Account for the small number of connectives. Are the paragraphs therefore incoherent?

Emphasis. Is the Emphasis of the first paragraph good at the beginning? At the end? What of the Emphasis of the second paragraph? Are the details in the third paragraph in the proper position?

THE SENTENCE.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SENTENCE: UNITY.

A SENTENCE has the same relation to a paragraph that a paragraph has to a whole composition. It is a unit, but a unit of a lower denomination. The Unity of a paragraph is due to the fact that the several thoughts contained in the different sentences are all grouped about a single idea. The Unity of a sentence results from the fact that a sentence is a simple statement of one thought, with its modifications expressed in phrases and clauses. The development of a paragraph depends upon its sentences; that of a sentence upon its various parts.

From the reader's point of view the principle that every sentence should be a unit is one of the greatest importance. For him, generally speaking, the length of one sentence measures the amount that he comprehends at one time. He takes in a sentence at a glance, and takes it in as a whole. If, now, what it brings to him is not a whole, if it forms an incomplete statement, or two statements crowded together, the reader does not get from the unit of expression a unit of thought. In order that there may be no confusion of this sort in his mind, each group of words that represents a sentence should represent also one idea, no more and no less.

In this way each thought is shown complete and single, an independent thing separated from everything else.

From the writer's point of view, also, the principle of Unity is one of especial and practical consequence. By its means he is able to make a separation of his ideas, to recognize one idea as it stands by itself, and finally, isolating it, so to say, in a single sentence, to make its Unity evident to the reader. By this principle he decides what modifications and qualifications do and what do not belong to a sentence, and accordingly by it he tests words, phrases, and clauses. For the writer, then, the principle of Unity as applied to sentences performs a twofold service. It teaches him to recognize a thought as a unit to be expressed in one sentence, and it forms a test by which may be detected in that sentence, when it is written, the presence of any word or phrase that is irrelevant.

The development of a sentence, as has been said, depends upon its various parts; that is, upon the phrases and clauses that contribute to the main idea. Subject and predicate form the nucleus, and round this gather different fragments of thought, many or few as the case may be, which unite themselves to it, and so go to make up the whole. Only, however, when a person stops to analyze his mental processes does he see that this is the way in which a sentence grows up in his mind. Usually he conceives it all at once, — subject, predicate, and modifiers all come to him simultaneously as a whole. At the same time, it is worth while to carry this analysis a little further, or rather to apply

the method of synthesis, and to see how a sentence may be developed by its modifying clauses. The following examples show the way in which subordinate ideas may be added to a sentence, contributing to and qualifying the main idea, without, however, violating the principle of Unity: —

1. The man who works his way through college has a hard pull.

2. The man who works his way through college has, in spite of the help that is likely to be given him, a hard pull.

3. The man who works his way through college, and is obliged to earn money at the same time that he is carrying on his studies, has, in spite of the help that is likely to be given him, a hard pull.

4. The man who works his way through college, and is obliged to earn money at the same time that he is carrying on his studies, although he will probably have help given him, will nevertheless, owing to the fact that his energies are so severely and constantly taxed, have a hard pull.

5. The man who works his way through college, and is obliged to earn money at the same time that he is carrying on his studies, although he will probably have help given him, will nevertheless, owing to the fact that his energies are so severely and constantly taxed, have such a hard pull that the effects of it will tell on his later life.

Here the original sentence has received as additions various subordinate clauses. These clauses are not so important as the main idea, but they are necessary to expand and to explain it; they add the details to the sentence, but they do not destroy its Unity. It is not meant, of course, that all sentences should be con-

structed upon this model. Far from it. Some sentences are long, some are short; no two sentences, any more than two persons, are exactly alike. These examples merely serve to indicate one way in which thoughts may group themselves about a central idea to form a sentence that is a unit. Still, no matter in how many different ways the arrangement may be made, the various members of a sentence have what may be called an organic relation, and taken as a whole they should always give complete expression to one idea.

This organic relation of the members of a sentence is the fact which the writer of themes needs most of all to appreciate, and by which he must guide his own work. He must take into consideration matters of co-ordinate and subordinate clauses, of participial constructions, of prepositional phrases, — in other words, the construction of the sentence in its grammatical aspect. This organic relation as made evident in the grammatical structure he may realize most quickly and put to practice in his own work most conveniently by study of what is known as the periodic sentence. A periodic sentence is one so constructed that it is impossible for the sense to be complete before the end of the sentence. The object of the verb, a necessary part of the predicate, an indispensable prepositional phrase, an inversion which puts the subject at the end of the sentence, — any one of these may, by rendering the sentence grammatically and logically incomplete until the very last words, make it periodic. The examples given in the preceding paragraph, and also the sentence

preceding this, are periodic sentences. In the first four examples the last word of the sentence is the object of the main verb, and consequently the sense is not completed until the word *pull* is reached. In the fifth example the presence of the word *such* in *such a hard pull* makes it impossible to stop as before, for the word requires the addition of a dependent clause of explanation. In the periodic sentence already referred to in this paragraph, the main verb is divided by the insertion of a participial clause, and a necessary part of this verb with its object, namely, *make it periodic*, is not supplied until the last words. The important point to be noticed here is that in all these examples the writer was obliged, before he wrote down his sentence, first to conceive it as a whole. He could not begin the sentence with no thought of how long it should last or how far it might carry him. He had to see the end at the same time that he saw the beginning. So with all periodic sentences, the peculiarities of the grammatical construction make it natural for one sentence to express one idea.

In a periodic sentence the grammatical requirements are such that the idea which it conveys must be a unit. For this reason the practice of making as many sentences as possible periodic in form is recommended as the best method for bringing an inexperienced writer into the habit of giving his sentences Unity. Such practice will strengthen his writing at one of the points in which it is likely to be weakest. The great fault in most of the sentences found in themes is that they are not

formed. They are simply written down in any fashion. The necessity of making a sentence periodic requires the writer to stop to consider its form. Stopping thus to think how his sentence is to be constructed and how and where it is to end, he naturally takes thought also as to what ideas it shall contain, and so makes an effort to give it Unity. It must not be supposed, however, that the periodic sentence affords the regulation pattern and the normal type of sentence structure, for such is far from the case. Its opposite, the loose sentence, in which the sense is complete at one or more places before the end, is as a matter of fact much more common in good writing. Questions of the comparative frequency and advantage of the use of each are points that are not here of the first importance. The thing for the writer of themes to realize and to accept is the fact that great gain in ability to conceive his ideas as units comes from practice in giving them the form of periodic sentences.

The danger of a violation of Unity in sentences must be constantly guarded against. A sentence occupies less space than a paragraph, and so, in inverse ratio, a violation of Unity in it is much more glaring. Some of the ways in which the principle is commonly disregarded it is well to speak of in detail.

The loose sentence is, as was implied above, by its very grammatical form, peculiarly open to violations of Unity at the hands of a careless writer. To such a person it never occurs to deal with his ideas as units, each in a sentence by itself. When he sits down to

write he strings one idea after another, connecting them at random by *and*, *for*, *but*, *so*, or *yet*, stopping at convenient intervals to put in a period and then to take a fresh start. This practice produces in composition what is known as the "bad loose sentence," and is at once easy and fatal. It is because the untrained writer so inevitably falls into this error, and thereby renders himself incapable of conceiving a sentence as a unit, that he is advised to make as many of his sentences as possible periodic. The utter lack of Unity in such bad loose sentences is shown by the following examples: —

1. I had been in Boston before, but only for three or four days, so I knew nothing about the streets, which, by the way, seem especially crooked to me, coming as I do from Chicago, where they are very straight and regular.

2. The room used for the purpose is in the basement, and as soon as the girls are dismissed at recess there is a wild rush downstairs, for each one knows that if she does not get there first the choicest morsels will be gone, and not only that, but she may get nothing at all to eat, for the presiding goddess is a close calculator.

In each of these cases the writer at the beginning of the sentence had no notion whatever what the end would be. It was entirely a matter of chance. Under such circumstances, the sentence could not, except by accident, have Unity. Sentences of this sort, then, should be entirely avoided, as being flagrant violations of the principle that a single sentence should present but a single idea.

The careless and easy notions about the construction

of sentences that produce in some writers bad loose sentences are responsible in other writers for results exactly opposite, but equally bad. Frequently a sentence is broken in two at a point where co-ordinate clauses are connected by the word *and* or *but*. The proper use of these two conjunctions is in connecting not whole sentences but parts of sentences. Hence it is very rarely well to begin a sentence with *and* or *but*. In applying this rule, however, to sentences containing the fault under discussion, the writer should not go through his work and strike out as superfluous each *and* and *but* in this position; but he should try if possible to make any two such sentences into one, and thus allow the connective to perform its proper function. The following examples illustrate this fault: —

1. In applying the rule, however, to sentences containing the fault under discussion, the writer should not go through his work and strike out as superfluous each *and* and *but* in this position. But he should try if possible to make any two such sentences into one, and thus allow the connective to perform its proper function.

2. Touchstone did not care much for this kind of life. He said that it was too slow. And it was not near enough to court life for him. There were no fine ladies and gentlemen to talk to. But it seems that later he became more pleased with it; for he fell in love with a country girl.

3. De Wilton was a young knight, and he was in love with Clare. Marmion also pretended to love the same lady. But desired really her riches and estates.

4. He told me that I should be able to prepare in three years. And he assured me that it probably would not be hard work.

5. This teacher was always spying upon us at all hours. And if he found anything wrong, he made a note of it, and told the principal.

In each of these cases the remedy is to unite the parts of the sentence, and so to make that which is already a unit in thought also a unit in expression.

Subordinate as well as co-ordinate clauses are frequently detached in the same way, and given a position as independent sentences, in plain violation of Unity. It is a common fault of young writers to separate a clause introduced by *while* or *that*, or a final participial phrase, from the sentence to which it properly belongs, and to set it up as a sentence by itself. Such an expression, from the very fact that it is subordinate, cannot stand alone; it must depend from the sentence of which it is logically a part. A mistake of this sort is, of course, nothing but an open disregard of a simple rule of grammar; but nevertheless its occurrence is frequent. The following examples illustrate this fault: —

1. The first five weeks of the term were hard. While after that my work was much easier.
2. I had no trouble in passing the examinations. While many whom I knew received conditions.
3. He said that he could not give me the book. And that he did not know who had it.
4. Besides all this the finances of the Athletic Association were always in a good condition. The gate receipts from the games we played always being sufficient to pay expenses, and sometimes giving us a handsome surplus.

5. This meeting, which is held early in the term, is always well attended and very lively. Some person who cannot be kept quiet always giving all his opinions on every subject, and causing no end of fun and laughter.

In these examples the dependent character of the clauses referred to has been completely ignored. As each of the clauses makes a part of the preceding idea logically, it cannot be separated from it grammatically. A sentence cannot be a unit expressing a complete idea when one member of it is detached.

A comparison of these several violations of Unity brings out the fact that in all the cases the underlying trouble is the same. The writer has failed to realize, or at least failed to show that he realizes, the principle that each sentence should be a unit, containing in its various parts the complete development of one idea. He has crowded two or more ideas into one sentence, or he has lopped off an important member and tried to make a sentence of it by beginning it with a capital, as if a sentence were dependent for its identity upon nothing but punctuation. In all these efforts, however, he has been guided by nothing but the whim of the moment. As a result, his sentences are without form. They only half do their duty. Further than this, a writer's paragraphs and even the whole theme may suffer from the lack of a proper principle to guide the construction of his sentences. Sentences make up both the paragraph and the whole composition, and a failure to keep distinct and separate the details of thought in these, the smallest complete groups of words, is sure to confuse

and obscure the thought in the larger groups. The principle of Unity in sentences is thus of the widest importance, and the neglect of it produces serious consequences.

Since, then, the sentence has the same relation to the paragraph that the paragraph has to the composition, the principle of Unity as applied to sentences demands that each sentence shall contain the development of one idea. A sentence thus constructed aids the reader in comprehending and the writer in conceiving ideas as units. The development of a sentence depends upon its various parts, and the different members taken together have an organic relation. Practice in the construction of periodic sentences is the best way for the inexperienced writer to realize this organic relation, and to learn how to show it in his work. Violations of Unity occur in (1) bad loose sentences, (2) in cases where a co-ordinate clause beginning with *and* or *but* is made a separate sentence, and (3) in sentences from which a subordinate clause is detached and set up as a sentence by itself. All these violations result from the writer's failure to think of each sentence as a whole, with parts having an organic relation to each other. The importance of the observance of Unity in sentences is great, for upon it depends the strength of both paragraphs and the whole composition.

CHAPTER X.

THE SENTENCE: COHERENCE.

THE principle of Coherence as applied to the sentence deals with the relation and the arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses. In paragraphs, Coherence is secured when the sequence of ideas is clear and logical; and the only problem for the writer is to find out what is the natural order and then to arrange his ideas accordingly. In sentences, the case is different. Here matters of grammatical relation must be considered, for the connection of the various members of a sentence with each other is chiefly a matter of grammar. On the clear and unmistakable indication of this connection Coherence depends; and therefore Coherence of sentences is the result of certain rules of grammatical construction.

RULE 1. *Whenever a word or a phrase depends in form or in sense upon another word or phrase, the relation between them should be evident.*

This rule applies to the relation of verb and subject, of adjectives and their substantives, of adverbs and the verbs that they modify, and of prepositional phrases and relative clauses to other parts of the sentence; it applies with especial force to personal, demonstrative, and relative pronouns, and to participles and verbal nouns.

A pronoun is a word which stands in place of a noun. This noun is called its antecedent. Generally the antecedent is expressed. When it is omitted, as in the sentence, "He who runs may read," the noun which stands

as antecedent is clearly evident. Coherence requires that the relation of the pronoun to its antecedent shall be clear beyond mistake, both in the way of connecting the pronoun with its antecedent, and in the way of identifying that noun as its antecedent. The following sentences show the incoherence that arises from neglect of this rule: —

1. John told my brother that he might come to see him if he would let him know when he would find it most convenient.

2. There is a door at either end of the car, although in some cities they are made with a door at only one end.

3. She did not consider it right to translate Virgil and Cicero with a "pony," which most of the class had no objection to whatever.

4. He is so good an organist that he can handle one admirably the first time that he plays on it.

5. Although John knew that he must learn his lesson before he could go home, he struggled against it. When he found that he could not get round it, he gave in and learned it in fifteen minutes.

6. Although he had been in business much longer, Mr. Adams found his new partner surprisingly ignorant of many details of the business.

7. I was greatly interested in yacht-racing, yet, owing to the fact that I had always lived in Columbus, I had never seen one before.

8. Most of the men had arranged their own costumes, and they made them look simply ridiculous.

9. The *Record* which I bought this noon is an enterprising paper and costs only a cent.

10. The folding-bed, an apparent wardrobe which my

chum always speaks of as such, is the largest piece of furniture in the room.

11. Good nature is a characteristic American trait, and one which they often suffer for.

In all these examples the incoherence is due to obscurity or ambiguity in the relation between the pronoun and its antecedent. Sometimes the antecedent is omitted altogether (examples 3 and 5); sometimes it is implied in a word derived from it (examples 4, 7, and 11); sometimes when the antecedent is expressed it stands near another word which might serve as antecedent for the pronoun and so ambiguity arises (examples 1, 6, and 8); sometimes the pronoun does not agree in number with its antecedent (example 2); sometimes the pronoun refers to a meaning of the antecedent which is slightly different from its meaning as used or as qualified in the sentence (examples 9 and 10). In every one of these instances, there was in the mind of the writer, as he set down the words in their present order, no thought of possible obscurity or ambiguity. To him the relation between pronoun and antecedent was entirely clear. He simply did not take into account the fact that in the hands of an untrained writer the English language is a difficult and obstinate machine to manage. It has him at its mercy as completely as the bicycle has in its power the person who is beginning to learn to ride. A constant effort to overcome the native difficulties in either case is the only thing that will finally give mastery. In sentences these difficulties are definite and well known, and one of the most vexing of them is the proper use of pronouns.

The proper use of participles and verbal nouns, or gerunds, is also determined by the first rule of Coherence. Since they are forms of the verb, they have tense and voice, and are transitive or intransitive. When a participle serves with an auxiliary to form certain tenses of the verb, its grammatical relation to the rest of the sentence is easily seen. In other cases its grammatical connection is — like that of a verbal noun — with the word which designates the subject of the action indicated by the verbal form. For example, in the expressions *Charles, looking out of the window*, etc., and *Charles, on looking out of the window*, etc., *Charles* is the subject of the action implied in the word *looking*, and so the word, whether participle or verbal noun, grammatically belongs to *Charles*, much as an adjective belongs to a noun. The connection, in cases such as these, however, is not always immediately evident; for this reason the proper use of participles and verbal nouns is a matter which demands of the experienced writer a good deal of care. The slightness of the grammatical tie between the modifier and the word modified puts all the greater obligation upon him to make their relative positions in the sentence such that the connection between them cannot be mistaken.

When the expression containing the participle or the verbal noun stands at the beginning of a sentence, to take a specific case, the word to which it is attached should be the subject of that sentence. An examination of the four following sentences will show the necessity for this practice: —

1. After pouring the mixture into a tube, it was heated slowly.

2. After pouring the mixture into a tube, the book directed me to heat it slowly.

3. After pouring the mixture into a tube, I saw him heat it slowly.

4. Having poured the mixture into a tube, I heated it slowly.

In all these cases the word designating the person who did the pouring is the word with which the verbal noun or the participle should be connected. In the first example there is no such word in the sentence; in the next two examples the word is there, but since it is the object of the main verb the eye does not meet it until after encountering the two subjects, *book* and *I*, respectively. In the fourth sentence, however, the noun to which the participle belongs is also the subject, and the relation between the two is perfectly clear. The practice of putting at the beginning of a sentence a phrase containing a participle or a verbal noun is not always to be recommended; but when such a construction is used it is well to remember that the noun with which the phrase is connected should stand as the subject.

With these general notions as to the proper use of the participle, the writer should be able to avoid the incoherence that springs from false participial constructions, and to correct it whenever it does occur. The errors that are caused by ignorance of the functions of the participle take so many different forms that it is hard to classify them. The underlying fault of all is

usually that the relation between the participle and the noun with which it is connected is ambiguous or obscure. Study of the following examples and correction of the false participial constructions found in them will show the student the commonest and most serious offences against Coherence: —

1. Returning to her guests, one might have noticed that her manner had changed perceptibly.

2. Being petted as he was by his mistress made Fido a spoiled dog.

3. Desborough, however, fared worse than the rest, having had his bed turned upside down, throwing him out on his head.

4. The heavy rain continuing made coming home in a carriage an absolute necessity.

5. I had scarce time to catch my breath in, and be ready to meet her, as she stepped upon the deck, smiling, and making my best bow, which was now vastly finer than some months before.

6. I observed that crystals were formed. Being in a test tube, I could watch them grow.

7. Wrinkled, painted, with an irritable temper and affected manners, Johnson bestowed on her during the whole of his life the most sincere love, and mourned her death as a loss inconsolable.

8. The old Forge House at Fulton Chain was struck by lightning last evening during a heavy thunder shower, tearing away a wall from the roof to the basement, and demolishing the bar-room and the laundry.

9. The first gas which I collected exploded with a sharp report, showing the presence of air. The second tube of gas burned with less noise, being purer.

10. The gas which had collected in the bottle on being touched with a match lit and burned.

In the correction of these errors it will often be found that it is impossible to retain the participial construction. Sometimes the only thing that will produce Coherence is a change to the construction of a dependent clause, in which the word that was formerly slighted may have the full rights of a subject, and may also perform the duties belonging to that position. The whole question of participles and verbal nouns is one of the most vexing with which the young writer has to deal. A knowledge of their functions will help him; observation of the practice of the best writers will help him; but nothing will give him complete mastery of this difficult construction except constant and careful attention to its proper use in his own work.

RULE 2. *Words or clauses that are closely associated in thought should be closely associated in expression.*

In the English language, inflection, that is, a change in the ending of a word to show a difference of grammatical relation (as *who*, *whose*, *whom*) is but little employed. Compared with Greek, Latin, and German, English is an uninflected language. When a language does not use inflection, it is obliged to show the grammatical connection of words by means of their relative position. In the sentence, *John saw Thomas*, the reader knows at once that John is the subject and Thomas the object of the verb. He knows it because the grammatical relation is indicated by the respective positions of the two nouns with reference to the verb; and this relation can be indicated by nothing else. Coherence of sentences therefore depends considerably

upon the proper placing of words. Adverbs, for example, should not be separated from the words that they modify; a relative pronoun must stand as near as possible to its antecedent. When expressions go in pairs, and the pairs are indicated by the words called correspondents — such as *either, or; neither, nor; both, and; not only, but also; on the one hand, on the other hand* — the first correspondent must be put next to the first member of the pair, and the second in the corresponding position just before the second member of the pair. The arrangement of words according to these directions aids the Coherence of a sentence in two ways: first, by grouping together parts which are associated in thought; and, second, by separating parts which are distinct in thought. The faults that the second rule of Coherence aims to correct are shown in the following sentences: —

1. Here the cat-o'-nine-tail flags grow in abundance, which the children delight to have in the fall.

2. About seven years ago a man was made Principal of the High School who had had considerable experience as a teacher, and who thoroughly understood his business.

3. If a student has done his work well he will know, whenever a picture of a figure is placed before him, in what position it is placed, and from what direction the light strikes the object, at the end of the first term.

4. I have tried to sketch the plan the writer had in view when the theme was written, on the opposite page.

5. I found that I could only do five problems.

6. I even took the English examination, for which I had not studied, but in this I failed.

7. Our football team not only was victorious, but also we were successful in baseball.

8. We either had to stop the game or lose the last train home.

9. He both gave me what I asked for and more besides.

10. I knew that on the one hand he could not get here before ten o'clock; and on the other hand, his train might be an hour late.

The violations of this rule which are most troublesome are those in sentences where correspondents are not properly placed. The fault is especially confusing because it puts the reader on the wrong track and at the same time makes him think that he is on the right one. Correspondents are used to set off two expressions one against another, and their place is next to the words that they connect. The purpose of this rule of Coherence, as also of the first rule, is to enable the reader to see clearly what the writer means to say. Every possible help to the reader's immediate and easy understanding of a sentence the writer is bound to give, and help by no means the slightest comes from the juxtaposition of words that are closely connected in thought.

RULE 3. *Similarity in the relation of ideas should be made evident by uniformity in the construction of the sentence.*

According to this rule, an infinitive clause must not be followed by a participial phrase when the ideas expressed by the two are parallel; the active voice must not give place to the passive voice, or the reverse, when there is no change of thought to demand the change

of construction; and, unless there is sufficient cause, the subject must not be changed in any other way. This rule does not, of course, require all sentences to be fashioned after the same pattern; but only warns the writer against varying the construction of parts of a sentence where a change is not only needless but also confusing. How needless and how confusing is such a lack of uniformity the following sentences show: —

1. Imagine yourself on the bank of one of our beautiful rivers, and that the time is the month of October.

2. On approaching the house I perceived him seated on the piazza, and that he was short, thick-set, with hair as white as snow.

3. He appears well-bred, and to have an excellent education.

4. His general method seems to be the separation of the subject under discussion into its elements, and to obtain an accurate knowledge of them; then to unite them, studying the construction thoroughly as the work goes on.

5. Why do people always put out the flag on any festive occasion? In the first place because it stands for the United States, and of course any patriotic citizen will do that much for his country; in the second, because it represents liberty and freedom; and thirdly, possibly from habit.

6. The afternoon was spent in sleeping, but just before dinner I went out for a walk.

7. Since we felt sure that he would come to the dinner, a place was reserved for him till the last minute.

8. The term idiom is used: firstly, to denote anything belonging to the grammatical construction of a language; and secondly, whatever has to do with the arrangement of words; third, the grammatical construction of one language which cannot be literally translated into another.

10. After he had been gone ten days I received a letter from him, and on the very next day he sent me a telegram.

In these sentences the reader, once started on a particular construction, is led to expect it in what follows. Instead, he finds the idea which would naturally be put in the parallel construction expressed by a totally different one. As a result, he does not understand the form of the sentence so quickly as he might, and, further, is not helped, as he should be, to see the similarity in the relation of ideas. In correcting any one of the above sentences the student may adopt either the first or the second of the constructions used. The point is that the expressions shall be uniform, for by such uniformity of construction the similarity of ideas is made evident.

The principle of Coherence, to sum up, requires that the arrangement of words shall bring out clearly the grammatical construction of the sentence. The three rules by which Coherence may be secured are: —

1. *Whenever a word or a phrase depends in form or in sense upon another word or phrase, the relation between them should be evident.*

2. *Words or clauses that are closely associated in thought should be closely associated in expression.*

3. *Similarity in the relation of ideas should be made evident by uniformity in the construction of the sentence.*

By observing these rules the writer makes it possible for his thought to be as clear and coherent to the reader as it is to himself.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SENTENCE. EMPHASIS.

In the sentence some words are of greater importance than others, just as in the paragraph and the whole composition the relative values of ideas are different. On these words in a spoken sentence the voice lays some stress. Unimportant words — such as the articles *a*, *an*, and *the*, prepositions, conjunctions, verbal auxiliaries, and the lesser words in the sentence — are passed over quickly; the significant words are dwelt upon, and thus given prominence. The important word in the sentence may be almost any part of speech, or in almost any grammatical construction, but on neither of these matters does its value in any sentence greatly depend. Grammatically, of course, the subject, the main verb, and the object of the verb are important, and the speaker may often make use of them to help in giving a certain idea prominence. What really makes a word emphatic, however, is the significance in that especial sentence of the idea for which that word stands, and the stress with which it is uttered.

The help of the voice in denoting the important word is, however, wanting in the written sentence. Here the emphatic word must be indicated to the eye; it must be given such a position that its importance shall be easily apparent. The beginning and the end of the sentence are such positions, and accordingly the principle of Emphasis as applied to sentences requires that the most

significant words in the sentence shall be the first and the last words. The writer is not to begin his sentence at random with an apologetic *I think* or *It seems to me;* he is not to start with some modifying clause on which little stress is to be laid; but he is to consider, first, what important word will best introduce his thought, and, second, how he may form his sentence so that this word may stand at the beginning. In the same way he must make the end emphatic. The sentence should not be chopped off short; it should not be allowed to wander away in an ineffectual succession of participial and prepositional phrases; but it should end with a word of weight. It is not possible, of course, that every sentence should both begin and end with important words, for other principles, such as that of Coherence, for example, must be regarded in the construction of sentences, but at least one end of the sentence should be emphatic. No matter whether the writer is able to carry out the principle completely or not, he at any rate should stop to plan a sentence before he writes it down, and should make an especial effort to put at each end of it words that are important.

In thus planning his sentences with a view to Emphasis, the writer is brought face to face with a serious difficulty. In English, as has been already explained (see page 100), the relation of words to each other is shown largely by their order. Such being the case, any arrangement dictated by Emphasis must not run counter to the order of words that grammatical considerations require. In other words, English idiom must not be

sacrificed to Emphasis. Where there is a deadlock of these two principles, that is, where the placing of the emphatic expression at the end will result in an order of words contrary to the practice of the English language, there is always a way out of the difficulty. Emphasis must be obtained not in spite of the requirements of grammar, but by means of them. The construction which is irreconcilable with the desired arrangement should accordingly be done away with, and a new one sought for which will allow the important word to take the emphatic position. In the sentence *I tried to get here sooner, but a bad accident delayed my train*, the important expression is clearly *bad accident*, but as the sentence now stands it is unemphatic. Any change in the order of words that puts *bad accident* at the end of the sentence renders the sentence unintelligible. The difficulty is avoided by a change to such a construction as will not interfere with the order necessary for Emphasis. If the sentence reads, *I tried to get here sooner, but my train was delayed by a bad accident*, the substitution of the passive for the active voice brings the important words into the emphatic position. The writer must thus always be ready, if the Emphasis of a sentence is faulty, to search for a construction different from the one which he has first used; and he must not be satisfied until he has found one in which the two opposing principles can be brought to an agreement, yet in which both Emphasis and English idiom are regarded.

Most sentences, however, in which the Emphasis is

bad owe this fault to the fact that phrases and clauses of trifling importance occupy the emphatic positions. All that these sentences need in the way of correction is that their dependent parts shall be rearranged, that the insignificant expressions shall be put away in the middle of the sentence, and the prominent words be thus given the Emphasis that they deserve. In the following examples the sentences marked *a* are unemphatic through faulty arrangement of their subordinate parts; and in the sentences marked *b* the rearrangement of phrases and clauses remedies the fault and brings out the Emphasis: —

1. *a.* The Putnam Memorial Rock is in the town of Redding, in the western part of Connecticut.
   b. In the town of Redding, in the western part of Connecticut, is the Putnam Memorial Rock.
2. *a.* I notice the expression of a man's eye and the way in which he carries his head, if I wish to form an estimate of his character.
   b. If I wish to form an estimate of a man's character, I notice the expression of his eye, and the way in which he carries his head.
3. *a.* He held his long arms free of his body, and swung them like flails when he walked.
   b. When he walked, he held his long arms free of his body, and swung them like flails.
4. *a.* The institution was truly a college, not only in a strict technical sense, but also in the broader application of the word.
   b. Not only in a strict technical sense, but also in the broader application of the word, the institution was truly a college.

5. *a.* It had always been my wish to be a chemist; and so I had already determined to come to the Institute when I entered the High School, four years ago.

b. To be a chemist had always been my wish; and so, when I entered the High School, four years ago, I had already determined to come to the Institute.

Almost at the first examination of these faulty sentences one can see what are the important words, and what rearrangement will give these words the emphatic positions. When this is once done, the gain is evident. The value of the gain, moreover, is as great as the labor to obtain it is trifling.

In further illustration of the importance of Emphasis in sentences, a study of the following theme may be useful.

A Character Worth Having.

If you should meet my friend, you would see a tall, slim man with a short, dark beard and black hair. You would notice instantly the sparkling black eyes and the high forehead. His expression suggests a thoughtful disposition, but a few moments of conversation would convince you that wit and humor were also in his make-up. His manner at first seems a little awkward, but his easy flow of language in conversation completely holds the attention of the hearer. You would be pleased to have my friend for a seatmate on a long railroad journey. His fascinating way of telling stories, by which the most common occurrence is made to possess interest and charm, is supplemented by a keen observation of men and things.

He is a persevering man. A poor boy, he worked for five years in a factory to earn an education, in the meantime

studying evenings. He spent a year teaching school, and earned enough to attend a law school. At times he wore the worst of clothes and went without necessaries in order to save his money. A lawyer must have friends; he knew scarcely any one. A lawyer must be ready to speak to any and every body; he was extremely bashful. He resolved to make friends and to overcome his diffidence. Perseverance accomplished both these resolves. Perseverance carried him through the law school. Perseverance caused him to start in his profession without any promise of success, and perseverance gave him success.

He is a kind-hearted man. He is fond of children, and his fondness is reciprocated. Though not rich, yet during the summer he often invites his friends who are not so favored as he to spend a week at his seashore cottage. No amount of money or persuasion will induce him to undertake a case against the poor or oppressed. He has himself been poor, and with the poor are his sympathies.

He is a contented man. When he had nothing, he could be content, and now, in better circumstances, he can also be content. This contentment shows itself in his cheery talk and in the fact of his always looking on the bright side. Happiness with him is a commodity, and is drawn from his immediate surroundings, whatever they are.

In the first paragraph of this theme the same cause is responsible for bad Emphasis in three sentences. *If you should meet*, *You would notice*, and *You would be pleased* are all unemphatic beginnings. There is no stress whatever on the word *you* in distinction from *I* or *he*, and the position that it has in these sentences is entirely unjustifiable. Further, the use of the second person where nobody is addressed is in itself a

fault. The end of the third sentence is also unemphatic. In the second paragraph the fourth sentence may be made more emphatic by a change in the order of phrases and clauses. In the final paragraph the last sentence is emphatic neither in itself nor as the last sentence of the theme. So much for the faults. The number of sentences, on the other hand, which have fairly and sometimes noticeably good Emphasis is large. In most of the sentences the first word is the subject, and as the sentences are short the subject cannot help being an important word. In the series of sentences each of which begins with *Perseverance* the Emphasis is well brought out. Here the reiteration of the word and its position every time at the beginning give it a prominence that makes the reader realize its full importance. No other sentences in the theme are, it is true, so strikingly emphatic as these; but, on the other hand, in extremely few cases is the principle of Emphasis entirely disregarded. The theme as a whole is interesting and forcible, and the presence of these qualities is due in great measure to the good Emphasis of the sentences.

Another point to be noticed in connection with this theme is that there is often within a sentence a sort of secondary Emphasis. A mark of punctuation in the middle of a sentence forms a resting-place for the eye, and so the nearest word is emphatic in position. This application of the principle of Emphasis is evident in the phrases and clauses of some sentences of the theme. The word *charm* in the first paragraph and *educa-*

tion in the second are words of some importance in their respective clauses, and they stand next to commas. In the fifth and the sixth sentences of the second paragraph, the words nearest to the semicolons are important. Toward the end of the theme the words *poor* and *commodity* are followed by commas, and are thus given a place of secondary Emphasis. If the general principle of Emphasis is a logical one, there is as much reason for applying it to clauses as to sentences. It is understood, of course, that in neither case must there be a change in the order of words such as will obscure their grammatical relations. Within the bounds of this limitation, secondary Emphasis in clauses and phrases is a thing that contributes decidedly to the force of a sentence.

Another means of securing Emphasis is what is called the balanced sentence. It is illustrated in the following example from the theme already quoted: —

A lawyer must have friends; he knew scarcely any one. A lawyer must be ready to speak to any and every body; he was extremely bashful.

Here one half of the sentence is set off or balanced against the other. In each half the grammatical construction is the same, but the thought is in strong contrast. The similarity in form thus enforces the dissimilarity of ideas. The structure of the balanced sentence is so plainly artificial that its frequent use becomes annoyingly monotonous; but an occasional employment of it to secure Emphasis is, as in the case above, highly effective.

Still another means of obtaining Emphasis, as illustrated in this theme, is the use of climax. By climax is meant the arrangement of words in a series that begins with the least important and ends with the most important. At the end of the second paragraph of the theme the statements of the different things that perseverance enabled the man to accomplish are given in this order: —

He resolved to make friends and to overcome his diffidence. Perseverance accomplished both these resolves. Perseverance carried him through the law school. Perseverance caused him to start in his profession without any promise of success, and perseverance gave him success.

Here the climax is one of sentences in a paragraph; but in the same fashion a climax of words in a sentence is always emphatic. The opportunity of arranging words in a series is constantly occurring. Three adjectives or prepositional phrases modify one noun, a number of statements are made about one subject, a number of subjects have the same statement made about them. In every case the series of words thus arising should go from the least to the most important. If this is not done, an anticlimax is the result, and nothing is more fatal to Emphasis than anticlimax. The following are sentences in which the writer should have employed climax and in which, owing to his neglect to do this, the arrangement of words is unemphatic: —

1. In morals, in appearance, and in manners, he is distasteful to me.

2. The new process is more nearly perfect, quicker, and safer.

3. We beat every school team in the state and even the Harvard freshmen, and we also won from all the local teams.

4. A bad accident in March prevented me from graduating with my class, and from attending school for the rest of the term.

5. Much of the furniture in the room and the carpet and the wall paper are dingy.

To improve these sentences it is necessary to rearrange their misplaced words so that they shall make a climax. When this is done, the gain in Emphasis is apparent. It is natural enough for a speaker to make use of climax, to begin with his weakest argument, and so, advancing step by step, to lead up to his strongest one; and the same attention to climax is required of the theme-writer in arranging the words in his sentences.

The principle of Emphasis as applied to sentences requires that the writer shall determine what words in a sentence are most important, and shall then give them prominence by placing them at the beginning and the end of the sentence. In thus making his sentences emphatic, he must be careful not to disturb the order of words which the grammatical requirements dictate. In general, Emphasis is secured by care in placing dependent constructions of small importance in the middle of the sentence, and thus making a place at the ends for the words that are really significant. The balanced sentence is an aid to Emphasis, and in the order of a

series of words there must always be a climax. The necessity for Emphasis in the sentence is as great as it is in the paragraph and the whole composition, for it is by means of this principle that the writer indicates the words that he considers important.

Summary of the Chapters on the Sentence.

The sentence is to the paragraph what the paragraph is to the whole composition, and its construction is governed by the principles of Unity, Emphasis, and Coherence. The principle of Unity requires that a sentence shall be the development of one idea. This development depends on the various parts of the sentence. Practice in writing periodic sentences gives valuable training in Unity, because it makes the student plan his sentence before he begins to write. Violations of Unity occur in bad loose sentences, and in sentences from which a co-ordinate or a subordinate clause has been detached. The principle of Coherence requires that the construction of the sentence shall be such that the reader may see clearly the relation of the words to each other. To this end, the relation between words connected in form or in sense should be made evident; words or clauses closely associated in thought should be closely associated in expression; and, finally, similarity in the relation of ideas should be made evident by uniformity in the construction of the sentence. According to the principle of Emphasis, important words should be put in important positions at the beginning and the end of the sentence. At the same time, the order of words necessary for grammatical clearness must not be disturbed. The balanced sentence and climax are other means for indicating what are the important words. Thus by means of these three principles the writer is able with due clearness and emphasis to present in each sentence the development of one idea.

WORDS.

CHAPTER XII.

WORDS: GENERAL AND SPECIFIC.

A WORD is the unit of lowest denomination in the table which is made up of whole compositions, paragraphs, sentences, and words. As a mile, a rod, and a foot each represent from one point of view merely a certain number of inches, so the three divisions of composition already studied represent in the last analysis nothing more than different groups of words. Of the combination of words into these higher units, enough has already been said; the work now in hand is to consider what part in English Composition is played by the lowest of these units, the single word.

The number of words in the English language, according to the Century Dictionary, is more than two hundred thousand. Such an enormous stock of words to express our ideas does not exist for nothing. It could hardly be the result of accident, or indicate a large and unnecessary surplus of language. There are, comparatively speaking, few duplicates. Each word has a history, an individuality, and a place of its own to fill, and thus it maintains a claim to existence. The dictionary, however, it must not be forgotten, contains the words used in every branch of knowledge. All of these words, or even most of them, it is impossible for a person of

general education to know, and still less to use. As a matter of fact, the number of words needed for every-day use in writing and speaking is, in proportion to the total number in the language, extremely small. The ordinary working vocabulary of an educated man is usually estimated at three thousand words.

Within the narrower limits of this vocabulary, whatever its extent, the writer must be thoroughly conversant with the meaning and the use of the words that it contains. A word, as has been said, has a distinct individuality. It is the sign of a certain idea, and whenever that idea comes to a writer's mind, he must give it expression by means of that word and no other. Other words, to be sure, may have nearly the same meaning, or may convey something approximate to the given idea; but the writer must not be so easily content. He must examine words, and then select the right one. For him to suppose that the first word which comes to hand will adequately express his thought is as illogical as it would be for him to feel that he may be sure of paying for any purchase with the first coin which he pulls out of his pocket. The chief thing for a writer to learn about words is to distinguish their values and uses, to have a word for everything and every word in its place.

This distinguishing of the meanings of words is, of course, in its more elementary stages, something which everybody does from the time when he begins to talk; but it is also a process that he continues or should continue all through his life. With the constant training

in language which a growing mind is sure to give itself, there comes a steady development in the ability to discriminate quickly and exactly the finer shades of meaning in words. This development is aided by studying the etymological derivation of words, the history of their use, by collecting into groups all the words that express different shades of one general idea, — for example, *go*, *come*, *run*, *move*, *walk*, *sally*, *hop*, *skip*, *advance*, *progress*, *jump*, *leap*, *start*, *slide*, *slip*, and all the other words used to express motion by a person, — by the study of synonyms, and by such other ways as are used to arouse a pupil's interest in his native language. Such studies can be carried on independent of theme-writing, and they give the pupil his first knowledge of kinds and classifications of words.

When, however, the student comes to do work in English Composition he is met by another distinction in the kinds of words, and it is one with which he must become thoroughly familiar before he can do satisfactory theme work. It is the distinction between general and specific words.

Let the student imagine for the moment that everything included under a given idea is represented by the space which a circle encloses. Thus within the circumference of a certain circle is contained, for example, whatever answers to the idea of boat. If it is desired to narrow this idea to steamboat, a smaller circle drawn within the space of the first represents this subdivision of the first idea. The second circle is inside and not outside the larger circumference, because steamboats

are one kind of boat; and it is smaller in size because the class steamboat is smaller than the class boat. To narrow the idea still further to iron steamboat, it will be necessary to draw a third circle within the second; and to represent the idea iron steam yacht, there is required a fourth circle inside the third. The relation of these circles to each other stands for a relation which exists among these words. It is based on the comparative extent of the application of words. It is the relation that exists between genus and species, and it is accordingly denoted by the terms "general" and "specific." The words that are represented by the larger circles are called "general" words; those represented by the smaller circles are called "definite" or "specific" words. This classification may be extended to words of almost any kind. *Look at*, for example, is a more specific expression than *see*, and *stare* is more specific than *look at; fine weather* is general, *clear and cold weather* is specific; *happy* is a general adjective, *exuberant*, *boisterous*, *jolly*, are specific. Sometimes the number of circles between the outer and the inner one is large, sometimes it is small; but the relation indicated is that of general and specific words, and it is one that, with every significant word which a writer uses, he must take into account.

As to the value and use of general and specific words, it is evident that the writer needs to have knowledge of both kinds and to employ both. He has dealings with both sorts of ideas, and he cannot make the words of one class perform duty for two. It is

here that his great difficulty arises. With general words he is fairly familiar. His temptation is to use them in places where definite words are the only ones that will express his meaning clearly and exactly. In the case of words, then, the business of the theme-writer is to make an especial point of employing specific language. On any subject which is assigned to him he is assumed to have definite ideas. These ideas, in order to produce on the reader the impression of definiteness, must be conveyed in no loose-fitting terms under cover of which half a dozen other ideas may be smuggled in; but every idea must be clothed in definite language, exactly adjusted to the character of the thought. When a broad and general notion is to be expressed, it requires, of course, general language. In precisely the same fashion, a definite idea must always be phrased definitely. In either case the rule is the same, — the word must exactly fit the thought.

The especial value of specific language lies in the fact that every definite word has the power to make in the mind of the reader a complete picture. The idea is not a vague form with a shadowy outline, but is well defined, filled in with detail, and stands out clearly. The difference in the images created by the words *boat* and *iron steam yacht* illustrates this. The first word calls up the notion of an indefinite something, whose chief quality is that it floats; the second expression brings to mind, in all probability, the remembrance of some large yacht as the reader once saw it, and all the circumstances of its appearance then — the color and the lines

of the hull, the rake of the masts, the glitter of the brass-work, the club flag and the private signal — come back to him and form a picture complete and full of detail. It is plain enough, then, that the greater the number of definite words in a theme, the more fully and accurately will the reader see the writer's ideas. The phrase *a good course in German* gives no notion whatever of the special merits of the course. The actual facts that this phrase so tamely describes may have been, for example, that the work was thorough, the teacher interesting, and the students enthusiastic. Of all these the vast and vague word *good* gives no hint. The reader may infer these characteristics, or any others that he pleases, or none at all. The general word arouses in him no interest in the work in German, because it throws hardly a ray of light on the subject. A reader, to take an intelligent interest in the theme, must see clearly and definitely and even vividly the ideas that are in the writer's mind; and to accomplish this result, the aid of specific words is indispensable.

The following one-page theme illustrates the way in which specific language calls up a definite and vivid picture to the eye: —

When I was returning home this evening, I noticed the steam rising from a small pipe in a little wooden shanty nestling close under the protecting heights of a great brick building. The steam came out with that whistling sound which always makes me think of peanut venders, and which sounds so warm and grateful on these cold December even-

ings. True enough, here was a tiny fruit and peanut stand. Cosy and snug in his little box, warmed by his smoky charcoal fire and his dingy lamp, the vender sat reading his evening paper. He had no care but to attend to a chance customer, no trouble but to protect his stock from the raids of marauding boys. I envied him in his happiness. Here am I, an atom in this student world, thrown by fate with thousands unknown to me, and I equally unknown to them; struggling with them one day and away from them the next. But with the vender it is different; he resembles more the molecule, he can exist by himself, he is dependent on no one, he is free.

The scene here described is familiar enough, but it is the enumeration of details rather than the familiarity of the subject that makes the reader see the picture so vividly. Words such as *shanty*, *nestling*, *cosy and snug in his little box*, *dingy lamp*, and others make the scene real. Without them the theme would be vague, and there would be nothing to give point to the contrast in the last lines. It is well to notice, too, that the writer has not allowed himself to employ a general expression in the description until he has first presented a picture filled with concrete, specific details. Then he sums up in general language: *I envied him in his happiness.* The phrase here, though general, is not vague; for the writer has just taken pains to show what this happiness is. Nowhere has he failed to select the word that happily suggests some idea needed to fill out the picture. As a result, the description makes one see the objects described, it makes one see them in clear and sharp outline; and all this it does purely by means of definite language.

The use of example and illustration is one of the best ways of bringing specific words into a theme. Then the language is of necessity definite, being applicable to only one concrete case; and so the example, if in the first place it is a good one, cannot help giving the reader at least one clear view of the subject. The man who wrote about his "good course in German" would instantly become specific, and so arouse his readers to attention, the moment that he introduced an incident or cited an example which showed the thoroughness of the work, or the interesting methods of the teacher, or the enthusiasm of the class. So a student, no matter on what subject he is writing, will find that he is obliged to make use of specific language whenever he introduces an illustration.

A man's thinking, if it is to appear clear and exact, must be expressed in clear and exact language. The word must fit the thought. As the witness is sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so the writer is bound to make each word express his meaning, his whole meaning, and nothing but his meaning. The ways in which he may fail to do this are various. Too often in the case of young theme-writers the word or phrase that is taken to express an idea does not do this because it is hackneyed. It is some well-worn expression which has done service again and again in the work of untrained newspaper writers and careless speakers. It serves as a convenient means of conveying an idea cheaply and quickly, and saves those persons the trouble of finding the word which expresses exactly

what they mean. Such expressions may have had a sharp and definite meaning in the beginning, but constant use of them for all sorts of purposes has worn away their freshness and exactness. Their presence consequently is always the mark of laziness or ignorance in writing. The number of these phrases is large, and as they vaguely indicate the nature of an idea, and at the same time come readily to hand, they offer an easy temptation to writers of both the above classes. The lazy writer uses them because it is too much work to think of the proper word; the ignorant writer because he does not know how far short they come of expressing his thoughts. Further, the practice of employing these worn-out phrases damages not only a man's style, but also his powers of thinking. The use of vague means of expression reacts on his brain, and tends to produce vagueness of thought. With such a vocabulary, clear and exact thinking is out of the question.

Of these time-worn expressions the number, as has been said, is large. The examples in the following list are all familiar both to eye and to ear; and the familiarity of these vague and meaningless terms is what has bred the contempt in which they are held: —

Every walk of life.
Victorious conflicts.
Misguided youths.
Faded into oblivion.
Returns that accrue.
Blessed with liberal endowments.
Praiseworthy innovation.
Duplicate the performance.
Fraught with consequences.
Accede to demands.
Retrace his steps.
Pale as death.

Consign to earth.	A feature of the evening.
Assembled multitudes.	Obtain the best results.

The following theme is curious for its mixture of such hackneyed terms with well-selected, appropriate, definite words: —

The approach of cold weather has already set the youth to thinking of skates and hockey, and visions of delightful hours spent in skimming over the glassy surface have been realized this week. Even yesterday morning, while the ice was in a very unsafe state, the small omnipresent urchin could be seen cautiously navigating the sounds and inlets of the Public Garden pond. Last night's cold wave strengthened the ice to such an extent that the urchins were not alone in their sport to-day. Hundreds of lithe forms could be seen skimming in and out, while other forms less lithe described circles, curves, and tangents that would have created envy in the breast of a drawing instructor. Nevertheless, all were jolly, and differences of class, creeds, and nationality seemed entirely obliterated; the old-fashioned rocker kept time with the click of the fine "nickel plate," and the rough gnarled hockey battled with the "selected ash."

Here most of the language is tame and tawdry, while the last sentence is specific and vivid, and therefore interesting. The contrast is sufficiently sharp to bring out all the faults of the former kind of words and all the advantages of the latter kind.

The vulgarity of this shoddy vocabulary it is the duty of every writer to avoid. The escape comes in his living up to the principle that the word and the thought must fit. Not the first shop-worn phrase that comes to

hand, but the one expression which in this especial case properly clothes the idea, the word which gives the writer's meaning, his whole meaning, and nothing but his meaning, — that is the word which he must feel it his duty to find. Such patient and constant practice is not without effect. The quest for the right word becomes to him a matter of greater and greater importance; he refuses to be satisfied with the easy and self-evident phrase, because it does not tell the truth about his idea. Finally the reward comes in his fuller power to adapt the word fitly to the thought.

When the word is thus fitted to the thought, the effect on the reader is striking. Having once recognized this fitness, he begins to think of the connection between the word and the idea as a thing that is, in a way, inevitable. He cannot now imagine any other word that could possibly do the service so well as this one does, and he would as soon offer to substitute another expression as he would to change a measure of one of Beethoven's symphonies. It is this quality of inevitableness that lifts a piece of writing into the realm of literature. In every great work of literature this quality is not merely apparent, but all-pervading; and perhaps nowhere is this more notably true than in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. A study of the words in this speech will show that every one of them fits into its proper place, and that any substitution or rearrangement is hardly conceivable.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

In the first sentence the words *conceived* and *dedicated* are worth noting. That they are chosen with evident design is plain from the fact that they are repeated in the next sentence. The three verbs in the sixth sentence are selected to produce the effect of

climax. *Dedicate* stands first, as it has been used in the preceding sentence. *Consecrate*, which follows it, expresses a greater degree of reverence and sanctity in the ceremonial, and *hallow* is, from its association with the Lord's Prayer, the most profoundly reverent word of the three. Again, the phrases used in referring to the soldiers who fought at Gettysburg are constantly varied, and for every change there is a reason. *Those who here gave their lives that that nation might live — the brave men, living and dead, who struggled here — what they did here — they who fought here — these honored dead — they gave the last full measure of devotion — these dead* — in each phrase some special point is brought out that is needed as part of the sentence to which it belongs. No interchange of phrases is possible; to say *The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget those who here gave their lives that the nation might live*, or *the unfinished work these honored dead have thus far so nobly advanced*, not only weakens the sense, but even is like sacrilege. Further, in the last sentence the word *highly* uplifts the thought in a way that no other adverb in the English language possibly could. A moment's consideration of the other words that conceivably might stand here shows that by comparison with *highly* they are all fatally unfit. Finally, the three phrases introduced by the prepositions *of*, *by*, and *for* express so completely and so concisely the whole theory of democratic government, that ever since these words were first spoken at Gettysburg they have been the instinctive and inevita-

ble utterance of every person wishing to characterize democracy. Thus analyzed, this speech, undoubtedly the greatest short speech of modern times, is seen to be in its whole character and effect inevitable; and this quality here, as in all writing, is due to the fact that the words are exactly fitted to the thoughts.

The word represents the lowest unit in the table of which the higher units are the sentence, the paragraph, and the whole composition. With only a small proportion of the words in the language can any person be familiar; but of the words that he does employ, he must know the exact meaning and use. The writer needs to realize the distinction between general and specific words, and to be especially careful to make his ideas definite in expression by means of specific words. The great value of such words consists in the fact that each one of them calls up some clearly defined image of the idea which it stands for. The use of example and illustration always brings specific words into a theme. Certain expressions are to be avoided because they are hackneyed and have only a vague meaning. The paramount thing is that the word shall fit the thought. It is only by this means that the reader is able to get the exact idea of the writer. When this adaptation of word to thought is as nearly as possible perfect, the association of the two then seems inevitable, and it is impossible to represent that idea by any other language. This quality of inevitableness is essential in every work that is called literature, and, wherever it is found, its presence is due chiefly to the fact that there is a complete union between word and thought.

CONCLUSIONS.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSIONS.

EVERY man when he sits down to write must have an object. He is in possession of a certain idea, and his purpose is to deliver it into the hands of the reader. He cannot produce anything which really deserves consideration as a piece of writing, if in the first place he has nothing to say, and if in the second place he does not make some effort to present his idea in such a way that it shall appeal to the person to whom he is addressing it. An idea and a reader are thus the two elements of the writer's task, and his object is, chemically speaking, to unite them. Without both these elements he can have no real object, and consequently no reason for writing at all.

While a writer must always have an object, the character of the object may vary greatly. Ideas are of many different sorts; so are readers, so are the circumstances under which the readers are addressed. Along with the variety of objects thus created, there must, of course, be great differences in the kinds of writing used. The means naturally adapt themselves to the end; and thus all the numerous classes of writing have arisen. For the man who adopts literature as a profession, familiarity with the technique of all these kinds is a part of his equipment. To the person who

is not a professional writer, such acquaintance is unnecessary. In one kind of writing, however, — in that which is first of all a straightforward and orderly presentation of ideas, — no man can afford not to be competent. Ability to write, as a means of communicating with clearness and accuracy ideas that all men employ in the every-day affairs of life, is demanded of every man. Here the object of the writer is to convey a given thought as completely and exactly as possible. It is a question of its transmission from one intellect to another, and the writer's aim is to make that thought appear and appeal to the reader's understanding precisely as it does to his own. In this kind of writing the three principles of Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis are indispensable. They represent, as was said in the beginning, broad and general principles, and are essential to all the undertakings of life. Writing which has for its object the clear and orderly presentation of ideas is closely allied to the regular work of every man who uses his brains, and is, moreover, likely at any time to be demanded of him. A reasonable ability in this sort of composition is therefore required of every educated man.

The object of this kind of writing is to make the reader inevitably understand. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary for the writer to know beforehand approximately how much knowledge on the reader's part he is safe in taking for granted. Any explanation of an idea needs always to be graded to the intelligence of the person to whom it is addressed. When a man is

explaining to a child the cause of dew, he naturally gives an account of the phenomenon different from that with which he would satisfy the questions of a man of his own age. He chooses his language, emphasizes one aspect of the matter, omits to mention another, and in general adjusts his explanation so that it will come as nearly as possible within the range of what a child can understand. He puts himself in touch with the person to whom he is talking. This the writer must try to do. He must roughly estimate what his readers may be supposed to know. By gauging their mental capacity and their amount of knowledge and experience, he gets a fair notion of what he may take for granted. He soon comes to think of this degree of intelligence not as an abstract thing but as being embodied in a concrete form. The reader for whom he gets in the habit of writing stands as the personification of it, — a person of general education, but nothing more; of some experience of life, but none too wide; of moderate mental ability, but nothing remarkable; solid, but not brilliant; willing to be interested, but not quick to apprehend, — in short, a composite individuality best represented by the phrase "the average man." The writer thus has a general standard by which he may examine his work and determine with what success he has accomplished his object of making the reader understand clearly and completely.

All these considerations imply that the student is rapidly outgrowing class-room work, and the writing of what his instructor has called themes, or essays, or

compositions. His written work, along with everything else that he does, begins to be on a larger scale; abstracts, reports, and theses occupy him. No longer is it possible for him to do his writing in a spirit of perfunctoriness. A certain idea is in his mind. He must, at all hazards, make his readers see that idea as clearly and completely as he himself sees it. That is his object. It compels him on, and stimulates him to use every care in selecting, arranging, proportioning, and wording his thoughts that will help to put them into the possession of his readers. The principles of Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis serve him now as never before; he sees that they are indeed fundamental. Further, his growing acquaintance with the ways and manners of his fellow-men, as he meets them in the world at large, awakens him to the supreme importance of presenting his thoughts so that they will appeal to readers. On every side his work of writing broadens him; and finally he comes to consider his ability to put a thing clearly and adequately as an indispensable instrument of his business.

So English Composition is a serious thing not only in the class-room, but also in life. If a man is to find his life good for profit and for pleasure, it is because he keeps himself in touch with his fellow-men, and keeps them in touch with him. The more numerous and diversified are his points of contact with the rest of the world, the broader and more useful and altogether happier will his life be. The sphere of his immediate and daily influence, however, is small. His hands to do and his voice to speak, cannot extend far. It is only in

proportion as he is able to keep up correspondence with friends at a distance, to plan business operations with associates in other cities, to prepare a report which shall convince persons of his knowledge of the special subject with which it deals, to address a meeting where his experience or his enthusiasm will be a strong influence, to write a magazine article setting forth the importance to the world of some new scientific discovery or invention, to put into permanent form the truth about any matter which concerns the human race, — it is, in short, only in proportion as he is able to plan and organize his thoughts and phrase them in clear and adequate language that it is possible for him to enlarge his life most generously. He may bid farewell to this book, but the opportunities to practise its teachings will come to him all the days of his life.

APPENDIX.

GOOD USE.

Good use, as the term is employed in English Composition, means the practice of reputable writers of national reputation at the present time. Good use as a standard of authority determines (1) in the case of words, what words belong and what words do not belong, for the purposes of English Composition, to the language, and the exact meaning of each word; and (2) in the case of sentences, matters of grammar and punctuation.

1. Words.

A word which is not in national, reputable, and present use is called a **Barbarism**.

A word which is used in a sense not given to it by national, reputable, and present use is called an **Impropriety**.

Barbarisms. — Words that are to be avoided because they do not fulfil one or all of the requirements of good use are

Foreign words: as, *abattoir*, *née*.
Obsolete words: as, *quoth*, *peradventure*.
New words: as, *poloist*, *laborite*.
Slang: as, *nit*, *swipe*, *cuss*.
Technical words: as, *gearing*, *reagent*.
Localisms: as, *co-ed*, *gym*, *exam*, *prof*.

Improprieties. — The following are examples of words that, although belonging to the language and having a well-

defined meaning of their own, are frequently employed with meanings not recognized by good use: —

Aggravate (used for annoy or irritate).
Alternative (used where more than two things are referred to).
Among (used for between).
Apt (used for likely or liable).
Between (used for among).
Factor (used for part).
Feature (used for circumstance or characteristic).
Gentleman (used for man).
Individual (used for person).
Lady (used for woman).
Liable (used for likely).
Most (used for almost).
Partake (used for eat).
Party (used for person).
Quite (to be used only as equivalent to completely or entirely).
Stop (used for stay).

Idiom is the name given to any form of expression which is peculiar to our language. An idiom cannot be translated into another language word for word. The words that make up an idiom have, when thus taken together, a special meaning which good use has established entirely independent of the sense that the words might logically and grammatically be expected to have. To express this idea these words must always be used.

The use of special prepositions with certain words is one of the most important forms of English idiom. The following list[1] shows what prepositions are required by good use to go with certain words: —

Absolve from.
Accord with.
Acquit of.
Agree with (a person).
Agree to (a proposal).
Bestow upon.
Change for (a thing).
Change with (a person).

[1] From Meiklejohn's "The English Language."

Confer on (= give to).
Confer with (= talk with).
Confide in (= trust in).
Confide to (= intrust to).
Conform to.
Convenient to (a person).
Convenient for (a purpose).
Conversant with.
Correspond to (a thing).
Correspond with (a person).
Dependent on (but independent of).
Derogatory to.
Differ from (a fact or opinion).
Differ with (a person).
Different from.
Disappointed of (what we cannot get).
Disappointed in (what we have).
Dissent from.
Glad at, or of.
Involve in.
Need of.
Part from (a person).
Part with (a thing).
Profit by.
Reconcile to (a person).
Reconcile with (a statement).
Taste of (food).
Taste for (art).
Thirst for, or after.

2. Sentences.

Grammar. — Good use requires the observance of the rules of English Grammar. The following are some of the most common grammatical errors: —

1. Use of the plural for the singular of Greek or Latin words: as, He gave me a memoranda (for memorandum) of his expenses; This phenomena (for phenomenon) has never been noticed before.

2. Wrong use of the possessive case: as, The library's steps, for The steps of the library.

3. Use of the wrong case of a pronoun: as, Who shall I give this to?

4. Errors in agreement as to number between noun and verb, or noun and pronoun: as, When the committee had made their report, it was discharged.

5. Use of *but what* for *but* or *but that:* as, I do not see but what his course is right.

6. Use of the cleft infinitive: as, To satisfactorily settle it.

7. Errors in the sequence of tenses: as, Nobody could do this if we cannot.

8. The confounding of *lie* (intransitive) with *lay* (transitive). The principal parts of the first verb are *lie*, *lay*, *lain;* of the second verb, *lay*, *laid*, *laid.*

9. The confounding of *sit* (intransitive) with *set* (transitive). The

principal parts of the first verb are *sit, sat, sat;* of the second verb, *set, set, set.*

10. The misuse of *shall* and *will.*

The following rules and examples bring out the distinctions[1] in the use of *shall* and *will:* —

I. *a.* To indicate the future tense in statements the proper forms are: —

Sing.	*Plu.*
I shall	we shall
you will	you will
he will	they will

Examples. — I shall go down town this afternoon. You will find me at home at five. They will dine with us.

In these examples the words *shall* and *will* indicate nothing but simple futurity.

b. To express intention, promise, or command on the part of the speaker in statements, the proper forms are: —

Sing.	*Plu.*
I will	we will
you shall	you shall
he shall	they shall

Examples. — I will never do it again. You shall not contradict me. He shall find that I will not allow my son to be treated thus. If I have my way, their hopes shall not be disappointed.

In these examples the words *shall* and *will* indicate that the speaker is expressing some intention, promise, or command.

II. *a.* In questions of the first person, *shall* is the only form allowable.

Examples. — What shall I do? Shall we be able to catch the train?

b. In questions of the second and third person, *shall* or *will* is used according as it may be expected in the answer.

Examples. — Will you go to walk with me? I will. Shall they

[1] The distinction between *would* and *should* corresponds in the main to that between *will* and *shall.*

be excused from doing this work? They shall not be excused. Shall you be at the club this evening? I shall.

In each case here the person who asks the questions decides which of the two words to use by considering which word will be used in the answer. He then employs that word in his question.

III. When a statement is put into indirect discourse (that is, when it is made to follow "He says that," or some similar expression), and when, at the same time, the subject of the dependent and of the independent clauses is the same, although the person of the pronoun is changed from the first to the third, no change is made in the auxiliary *shall* or *will*.

Examples. — He says that he will take dinner with us. (I will take dinner with you.) He told me that he should not be able to go to the theatre to-night. (I shall not be able to go to the theatre to-night.) He writes that he shall probably come on Tuesday. (I shall probably come on Tuesday.) He promises that he will not make another such foolish attempt. (I will not make another such foolish attempt.)

Punctuation. — The following rules and examples indicate the practice in punctuation which is sanctioned by good use: —

General Rule. — The function of the comma, the semicolon, the colon, and the dash is to help the reader to understand the construction of the sentence, and to see at a glance the relation of the different parts to each other. No one of these marks of punctuation is to be used, unless it plainly serves this purpose. Special rules must always be corrected by this general rule.

The Comma. — The comma is used (1) to separate words, phrases, and clauses in a series; and (2) to mark the beginning and the end of certain subordinate or explanatory expressions (words, phrases, or clauses). The expressions thus set off are always more or less parenthetical in nature, and easily detachable from the sentence. When the expressions are so closely connected that they seem an integral part of the logical structure, no commas are used.

1 *a*. The vast, gloomy, and inhospitable city lay before him.

1 *a*. Adjectives in a series, separated by commas.

1 *b*. He is distasteful to me in appearance, in manners, and in morals.

1 *b*. Phrases in a series, separated by commas.

1 *c*. I should write better themes if my mind were quicker, if I had had longer training, and if I had the faculty of observation.

1 *c*. Clauses in a series, separated by commas.

1 *d*. I put on my hat, opened the door, and went out.

1 *d*. Independent clauses in a series, separated by commas.

2 *a*. He was not, however, on the best terms with me.

2 *b*. These, then, were my hopes.

2 *a*, 2 *b*. A single word set off by commas.

2 *c*. I assure you, my dear fellow, that I could not help it.

2 *c*. Words of address, set off by commas.

2 *d*. He telephoned for Dr. Bacon, the best physician in town, to come at once.

2 *d*. Phrase in apposition, set off by commas.

2 *e*. That man, who once had my highest regard, has turned out a forger.

2 *e*. Relative clause set off by commas, because it is in the nature of a parenthesis (non-restrictive clause).

2 *f*. No man who has ever been imprisoned can have my confidence.

2 *f*. Relative clause not set off by commas, because an integral part of the sentence (restrictive clause).

2 *g*. A man must be sure, whenever he makes a statement, that the facts are right.

2 *g*. Dependent clause, set off by commas.

2 *h*. Whenever a man makes a statement, he must be sure that his facts are right.

2 *h*. Dependent clause at beginning of sentence, and so only one comma needed.

2 *i*. I advised him not to do it, because it would injure his reputation.

2 *i*. Dependent clause at end of sentence, and so only one comma needed.

The Semicolon. — The semicolon is used (1) when the parts of a sentence are but slightly connected, or when they are set off against each other; and (2) in long sentences where separation between clauses that contain commas must be indicated.

1 *a*. A lawyer must have friends; he knew scarcely any one. A lawyer must be ready to speak to any and every body; he was extremely bashful.

1 *a*. Semicolons used because there is a more distinct separation of ideas than a comma would indicate.

1 *b*. I spent the whole afternoon in the library, and consulted at least twenty books; but I could not find the reference that I desired.

1 *b*. Semicolon used to show that the last clause is set off against the first two clauses.

2. The first word calls up the notion of an indefinite something, whose chief quality is that it floats; the second expression brings to mind, in all probability, the remembrance of some large yacht as the reader once saw it; and all the circumstances of its appearance then — the color and the lines of the hull, the rake of the masts, the glitter of the brasswork, the club flag, and the private signal — come back to him and form a picture complete and full of detail.

2. Semicolons used because the clauses that they separate contain commas, and because a different mark is thus needed to indicate the larger divisions of the sentence.

The Colon. — The colon is used to indicate that a formal statement of particulars is to follow.

1 *a*. His writings may be put into three classes: essays, novels, and poems.

1 *b*. The faults that ruined their plan were: first, lack of care in selecting a location; and, second, irresponsible agents.

1 *a*, 1 *b*. Colons used in these two sentences, because in each case there is a specification of particulars.

The Dash. — The dash is used (1) to mark the beginning and the end of any especially abrupt or lengthy interruption of the construction; and (2) to introduce at the end of a sentence an expression that is particularly significant, or that summarizes the sentence.

1. The artless use of the word *add* is direct evidence against the writer that his plan of proportions — if he ever had any — has gone completely out of his head.

2. An examination of the substance of these so-called paragraphs shows that what the writer has said in them is in fact all about one subject, — the objections that are made to the lecture system.

1. Dashes indicate a violent interruption. See also above, No. 2 under semicolon.

2. Dash used to introduce an expression explaining and emphasizing the "one subject."

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